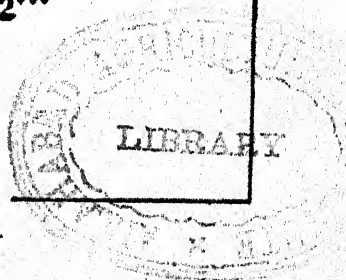


The Great Rehrus

*"Freedom's battle once begun
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft is ever won."*

The Great Nehrus

by
A. S. Bright



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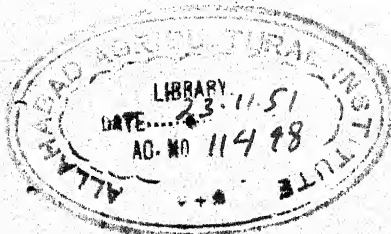
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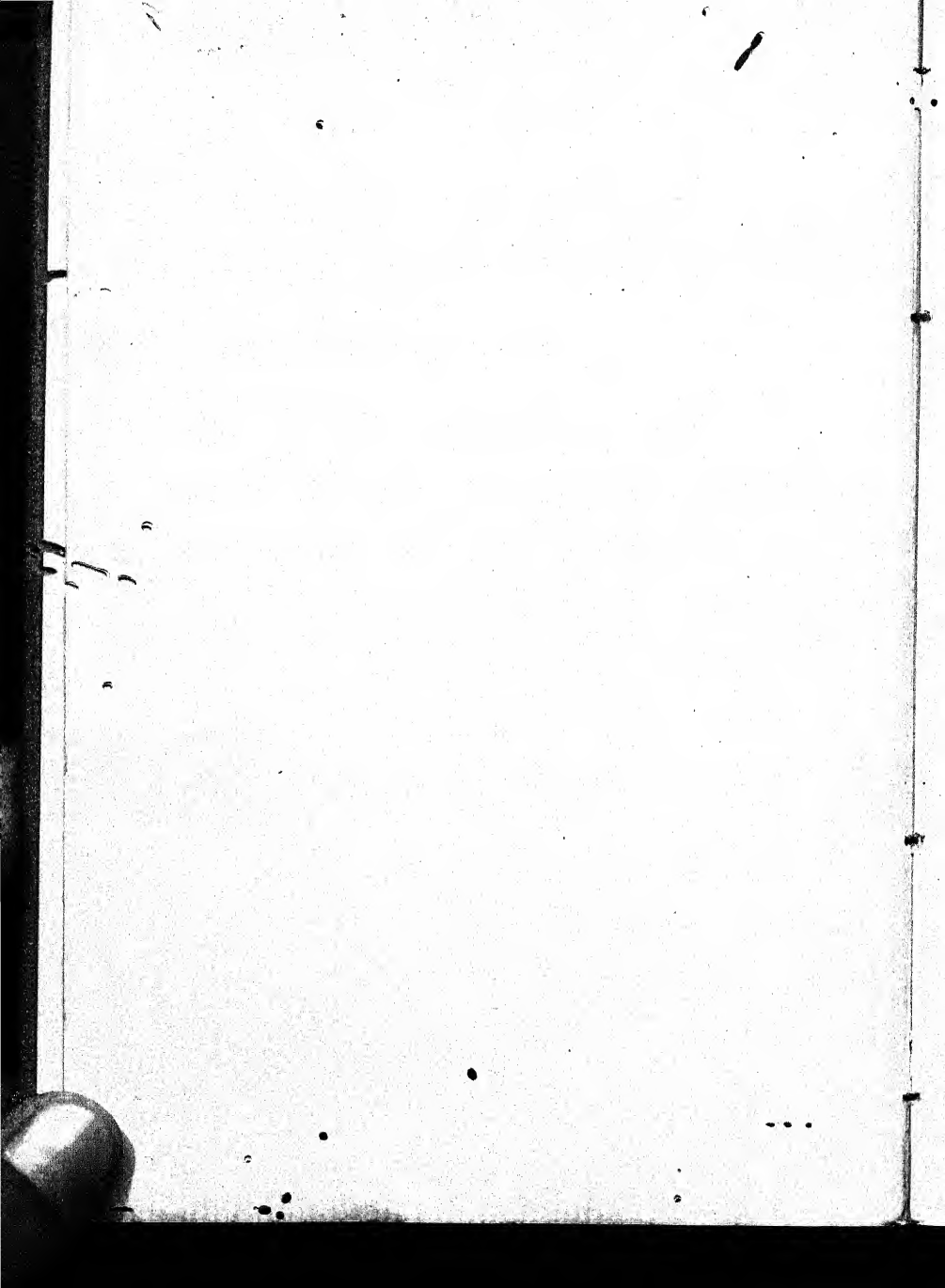
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Integration follows disintegration, but each integration is perhaps on a higher level than the previous one, for it carries subconsciously somewhere the memory of past successes and failures. The burden of the past pursues us, and it is both a burden and inspiration, for it drags us down and at the same time pushes us on. Sometimes we feel vital and youthful and full of energy; at other times thousands of years weigh us down and we feel old and a little weary at this long and interminable pilgrimage. Both are part of us and make us what we are and out of that ceaseless intermingling and conflict something new is always arising.

Jawaharlal Nehru



Raj Kaul Nehru

Lakshmi Narayan Nehru

Ganga Dhar Nehru

Bansi Dhar
Nehru

Nandlal
Nehru

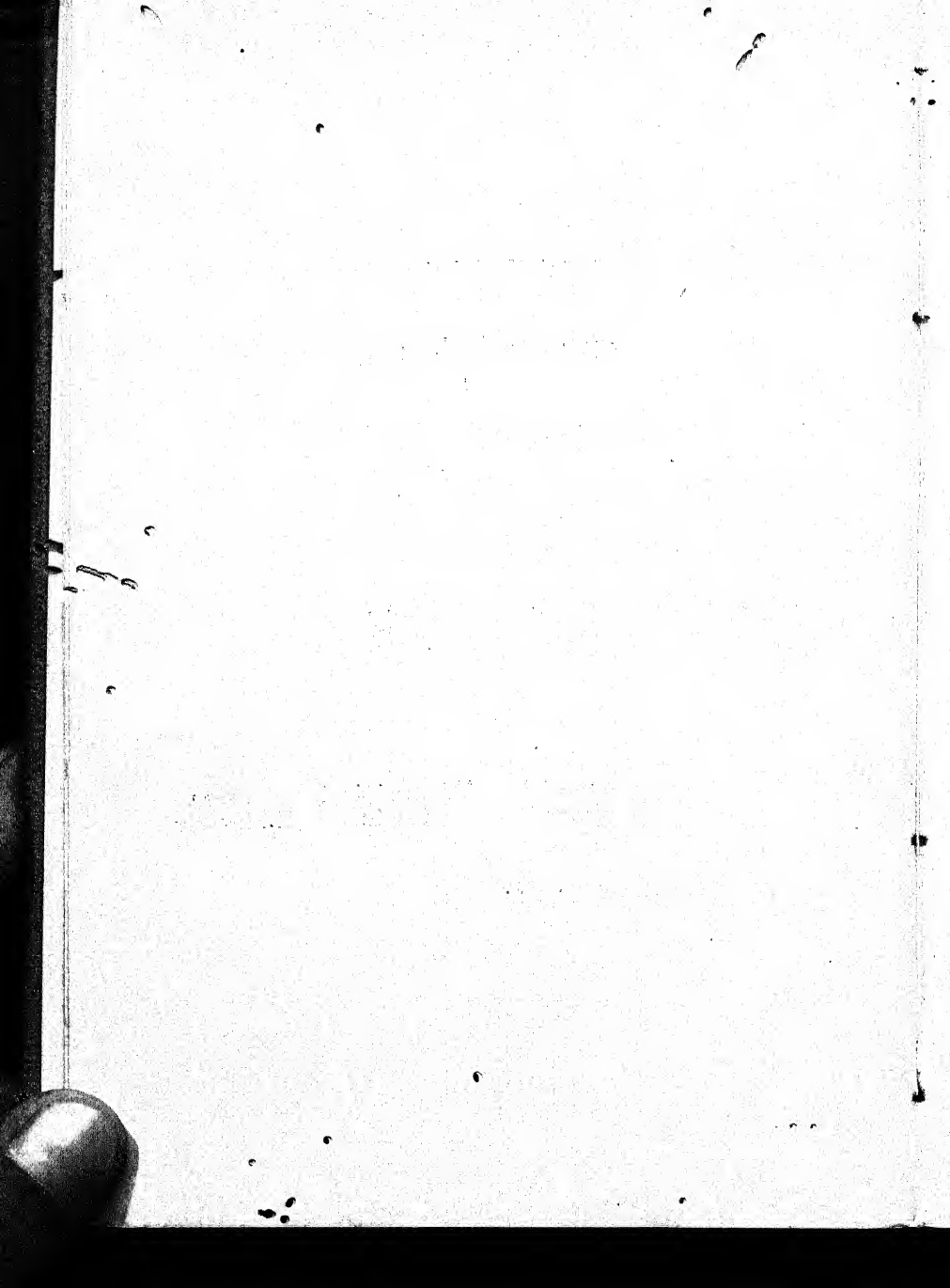
Motilal
Nehru

Jawaharlal
Nehru

Vijayalakshmi
Pandit

Krishna
Hutheesing

Indira Priyadarshini



PREFACE

We are not here to drive, to drift,

We have hard work to do and stones to lift,

Shun not the life, face it, it is God's gift.

That has been the lodestar of the Great Nehrus whose career and character we are about to study. They have drunk deep the cup of life, like Ulysses, to its dregs. Consequently they stand out as beacons to many a shipwrecked brother or sister who has foundered in the ocean of life.

Pandit Motilal Nehru had built up a fortune after sixty years' hard labour, but he kicked off everything on hearing the country's call. He realised what Emerson has said :

Not gold, but only men can make

A people great and strong—

Men who, for truth and honour's sake,

Stand fast and suffer long.

Brave men who work while others sleep,

Who dare while others fly—

They build a nation's pillars deep,

And lift them to the sky.

The three Great Nehrus—Motilal, Jawaharlal and Vijayalakshmi—have always been true

to the noble sentiments expressed in the verses
quoted above. And this book is written to
trace that golden thread of their lives.

LAHORE :

J. S. B.

February, 1947.

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INTRODUCTORY

When the history of the Freedom Movement in the world comes to be written, the Nehrus will cover a few golden leaves among a handful of freedom-fighting families in the international chronicles. The Nehrus achieved their principal objective materially on August 15, 1947, when India became triumphantly an independent country ; and any further achievements or non-achievements, faults, foibles and failures of the Nehrus cannot add to or subtract from their real greatness.

The history of the Nehrus is the history of India's struggle for freedom. Ever since Mahatma Gandhi pitched his non-killing guns against the mighty explosives of the British Empire, the Nehrus devoted themselves doggedly and determinedly to the cause of political emancipation. That is no mean endeavour. The Nehrus have played a sunny role in the starry struggle on the political firmament of India.

In this book we are principally concerned with three notable personages in the Nehru family : a father and a son, a brother and a sister. Jawaharlal is virtually the right angle of the trio. With his illustrious father, Motilal Nehru, and his sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the great triangle of the Nehru family is completed.

.. Some persons might misunderstand the

inclusion of Vijayalakshmi Pandit, because she does not bear the Nehru name, but she does bear the Nehru spirit and the blood of the Nehrus runs through her veins. Lakshmi is every inch a Nehru.

Motilal Nehru was the father of defiant patriotism and the first pillar of Gandhism. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi himself drank deep at the fountain of his courage. A peerless freedom-fighter, Motilal transmuted the spineless leadership of the liberals in India into a death-defying crusade of sterling independence.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the noble son of a noble father, is an introduction to himself. He enjoys a roaring popularity in international politics. And well he deserves that popularity, because he has buttressed up the cause of independence from Delhi to Dublin and from pole to pole.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the dauntless daughter of Motilal Nehru and the sweet sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, has played her part courageously in the rank and file of the Indian National Congress from which she rose gradually to the pinnacle of patriotic glory. She thrilled America, as the unofficial ambassador of India on the eve of India's freedom. In the United Nations she proved to be a guardian angel for the suppressed and the oppressed nations in the right royal traditions of her glorious brother. She is perhaps the first and the only woman ambassador in the world.

Motilal Nehru
Jawaharlal Nehru
Vijayalakshmi Pandit

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PART I

MOTILAL NEHRU
[An Historical Study]

Motilal is not dead ; he will live long.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

*Decide India's fate in Swaraj
Bhawan; decide it in my pre-
sence and let me be a party to
the final honourable settlement
of the fate of my motherland.
Let me die, if die I must, in the
lap of a free India. Let me sleep
my last sleep not in a subject
country, but in a free one.*

Motilal Nehru



Chapter One

THE HOUSE OF NEHRUS

The house of the Nehrus is the nursery of freedom-fighters. They have few equals not only in the chronicles of India, but in the entire history of the world. Roosevelts in America and Pitts in England are some visible parallels of the Nehrus in India.

The honour of founding this remarkable family of the Nehrus belongs to Raj Kaul who migrated from Kashmir to Delhi in the eighteenth century. He came down from the lofty mountains to seek fame and fortune in the dusty plains. There was the hand of destiny behind this move, because the temptation came to him from no smaller quarter than the Mogul Emperor, Farrukhsiar, who succeeded Aurangzeb. It was Raj Kaul's scholarship in Persian and Sanskrit which had captivated Farrukhsiar during his visit to Kashmir. Forthwith an estate was bestowed upon Raj Kaul in the imperial capital of Delhi on the banks of a canal and, from the fact of his residence on the *nahar* (which means a canal), the word "Nehru" came to be attached to his name.

"Kaul had been the family name," says Jawaharlal, "this changed to Kaul-Nehru; and, in later years, Kaul dropped out and we became simply Nehrus."

I. THE ELDER NEHRUS

The King Farrukhsiar, who had tempted Raj Kaul away from his literary haunts in the enchanted land of Kashmir, was only a shadow emperor; and it was not long before the Mogul Empire fell into pieces and the Nehrus had to fend for themselves. The family experienced many ups and downs in the unsettled times. The Nehrus soon lost their estate but not their courage. Lakshmi Narayan Nehru, the grandfather of Motilal, became the first judicial representative to the East India Company at the court of the Mogul Emperor who ruled over a petty dominion. Ganga Dhar Nehru, the father of Motilal, was the Kotwal of Delhi for some time before the Revolt of 1857. The family was marked by a sense of responsibility and strong sense of character. Thus writes C. F. Andrews :

“Kashmiri Brahmins, to which class Pandit Motilal Nehru belonged, are well known all over the north of India both for their intellectual powers and fine appearance. They are, by birth, what may truly be called an aristocratic race, and easily recognised as such. Motilal was typical of this distinguished class and in his old age he gained the reputation of being the ‘aristocrat of the Assembly’. His spotless khaddar dress, with his white Kashmiri shawl, suited him perfectly, and his portrait is rightly given the place of honour in his son’s *Autobiography*. ‘The fine features—which I have mentioned—and the fair complexion run through the whole family, and have descended

from father to son'."

II. NEHRUS ON THE MOVE

The Revolt of 1857 shepherded Nehrus out of Delhi. They lost their valuable property. But even more valuable than material possessions were the family papers which perished in the great conflagration. All literary works of Raj Kaul were destroyed by the vandals. The Nehrus joined the army of fugitives and marched to Agra. *En route* they barely escaped being put to the sword by English soldiers.

"My father was not born then," says Jawaharlal, "but my two uncles were already young men and possessed some knowledge of English. This knowledge saved the younger of the two uncles, as well as other members of the family from ignominious end. He was journeying from Delhi with some family members, among whom was his younger sister, a little girl who was very fair, as some Kashmiri children are. Some English soldiers met them on the way and they suspected this little aunt of mine to be an English girl and accused my uncle of kidnapping her. From accusation to summary justice and punishment was usually a matter of minutes those days, and my uncle and others of the family might well have found themselves hanging on the nearest tree. Fortunately for them, my uncle's knowledge of English delayed matters a little and then someone who knew him passed that way and rescued him, and the

others.”

III. THE EIGHTEEN SIXTIES

The calamities of the revolt were too much for the sensitive soul of Ganga Dhar Nehru, the ex-Kotwal of Delhi, who had seen better days, and now had to begin his career anew at Agra. After five years of rough life he passed away in February, 1861. Three months after was posthumously born his son, Motilal.

“In a little painting,” says Jawaharlal, “that we have of our grandfather, he wears the Mogul court dress with a curved sword in his hand, and might well be taken for a Mogul nobleman, although his features are distinctly Kashmiri.”

Motilal Nehru marks a break of the Nehru family from Mogul traditions to British fashions. If the father was a Mogul nobleman, the son grew up to be an English gentleman. Pants and coats and hats took the place of imposing Mogul dress.

The sixties of the last century produced most of the intellectual giants in India who ultimately wrestled freedom out of the British hands. If the Doctrine of Karma is true, and there is nothing to show that it is false, these colossal patriots might well have been the progeny of the heroes who laid down their precious lives in the Revolt of 1857.

“It is a curious fact,” writes C. F. Andrews, “that Motilal’s birthday came on exactly the same day of the year and month as that of the Poet (Rabindranath Tagore), for he was born

on May 6, 1861.

"Among his contemporaries, in Allahabad, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya comes nearest to him in age. Dr. Brajendranath Seal, that giant of massive learning in Bengal, who has just passed away, was somewhat younger. Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray, the renowned chemist, is about the same age as Rabindranath Tagore. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose was a contemporary. Sir Nilratan Sarkar, who is still with us, belongs to the same generation. Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab was younger. Many names might be recalled in other provinces, but space will hardly allow it. What I have tried to point out is that the 'sixties' of last century produced a larger number of eminent men than the years that followed. It must not be forgotten that Mahatma Gandhi himself comes just within this period."

Thus modern history of India dates from the sixties when, after the assumption of power over India by Queen Victoria, a new generation arose out of the ashes of the great Revolt of 1857.

After the death of Motilal's father, the burden of supporting the family fell upon the shoulders of his elder brothers. Bansi Dhar Nehru entered the judicial department of the British Government. He was appointed successively to various posts. The younger brother, Nandlal Nehru, was the Dewan of Khetri State in Rajputana for ten years. Later on, Nandlal settled down as a lawyer in Agra.

Little Motilal lived with Nandlal Nehru.

He grew up under the sheltering care of this brother. There was a bond of deep affection between the two. Being the youngest son, Motilal was also the favourite of his mother.

"She was an old lady," writes Jawaharlal, "with a tremendous will of her own who was not accustomed to be ignored. It is now nearly half a century since her death, but she is still remembered amongst old Kashmiri ladies as a most dominating old woman and quite a terror if her will was flouted."

IV. FROM AGRA TO ALLAHABAD

The brother of Motilal had attached himself to the High Court at Agra. When the High Court moved to Allahabad, the Nehrus moved with the High Court. Ever since Allahabad has been the home of the Nehrus. From Srinagar to Delhi, from Delhi to Agra, and from Agra to Allahabad completed the journey of the great Nehru family.

It was here at Allahabad that Motilal went through school and college. Soon he picked up Persian and Arabic. In his early teens he began learning English. His college career was marked by merry pranks and escapades. He was far from being docile or devoted to his studies. Rather he interested himself in novel adventures and misadventures. He headed the naughty boys in every type of mischief. He was attracted to Western dress and Western ways. His English professors liked his buoyant spirit and were fond of him. They led him out of a fix whenever his mis-

chief cornered him.

In spite of his indifference to studies, Motilal did fairly well in the examinations. As he appeared for B.A. examination, he was not satisfied with his first paper and boycotted the examination and refused to appear again next year.

“Although as a boy,” says C. F. Andrews, “Motilal took little interest in his school and college studies he was from an early age keenly interested in the subject of law. He came out first as ‘gold medallist’ in the High Court Vakils examination and showed at once his marked ability. His father had died three months before he was born, so that he never knew what it was to have a father. But his elder brother, Nandlal, who was much older than himself, took the place of a father towards him during his school and college days and afterwards introduced him into his own practice at the bar. This brother, however, died very early in Motilal’s legal career and thus he was soon thrown upon his own resources.

“According to the immemorial custom of India, Motilal was now obliged to bear the burden of all the members of the family who were settled in Allahabad. This meant very hard work at his legal profession, from morning to night, building up his practice. But he thoroughly enjoyed it and very rapidly climbed the ladder which led to success.”

It was fortunate for the Nehrus that when Nandlal was overtaken by death, Motilal had already served apprenticeship for three years in

law and was ready to step into the shoes of his brother. He plunged himself into work. He was bent on success. All the briefs of his brother came to him. At an early age he established himself as a successful lawyer. He admired the Englishmen and their ways. He had a feeling that his own countrymen had fallen rather low. He felt that Indians deserved what they had got.

There was a touch of contempt in his mind for the talkative politicians. They talked and talked without doing anything.

"Also," says Jawaharlal, "there was a thought, born in the pride of his own success, that many—certainly not all—of those who took to politics had been failures in life."

Consequently, Motilal did not take any great interest in the Indian National Congress. He was too busy with his profession. Moreover, he felt unsure of his ground in politics. He could not play a second fiddle to anybody. The aggressive spirit of his childhood had given him a new will to power. He loved a fight, but then there was little fight in the politics of the Congress.

Chapter Two

THE LORD OF LUXURY

Motilal Nehru climbed the ladder of success very rapidly and soon came to be counted among the topmost lords of luxury in India. An ever-mounting income revolutionised his standard of living, because more income meant to him more expenses.

"The idea of hoarding," says Jawaharlal, "seemed to my father a slight on his own capacity to earn whenever he liked and as much as he desired."

Motilal was full of the spirit of play. He was fond of good living. Naturally he found little difficulty in spending what he had earned. Gradually the Nehrus became more and more Westernised. Motilal set the pace for fashion in Allahabad as much as the Prince of Wales did in London. The house of the Nehrus became a magnetic centre of fancy and fashion for all beaux and belles in Allahabad.

I. EVENINGS IN ALLAHABAD

Evenings in Allahabad acquired the glamour and grandeur of the evenings in Paris. Many friends came to visit Motilal in the evening. He relaxed after the tension of the day. And the house resounded with his tremendous laughter. Motilal's laugh became famous in Allahabad. Little Jawaharlal used to peep at him and his

friends from behind a curtain. He was trying to make out what these big people were talking about. If the child was caught eavesdropping, he was affectionately punished. And his punishment was to sit on his father's knee. Once the boy saw his father drinking claret or some other red wine. Whisky he knew. Jawaharlal had often seen his father and his friends drinking whisky. But the new red stuff sent a fright into the backbone of the boy.

"I rushed to my mother," says Jawaharlal, "to tell her that father was drinking blood."

Motilal was a hearty man. And he enjoyed society heartily. He drank as others drank. He was a monument of strength and courage. But he also had a rough temper. He was sometimes terrible and the victim of his anger shivered with fright. But he had also a strong sense of humour. And he had an iron will. He could control himself always as a rule.

"One of my earliest recollections," says Jawaharlal, "is of his temper, for I was the victim of it. I must have been five or six then. I noticed one day two fountain-pens on his table and I looked at them with greed. I argued with myself that father could not require both at the same time and so I helped myself to one of them. Later I found that a mighty search was being made for the lost pen and I grew frightened at what I had done, but I did not confess. The pen was discovered and my guilt proclaimed to the world. Father was very angry and he gave me tremendous thrashing. Almost blind with pain and mortification at

my disgrace I rushed to my mother, and for several days various creams and ointments were applied to my aching and quivering body."

II. THE HOUSE OF PEACE

In 1899 Motilal Nehru built for himself a palatial house—which is now a national property—and called it Anand Bhawan. It literally means the house of peace. The house has a big garden and a swimming pool. Additional buildings were put up later on.

In the evening the friends of Motilal used to come to the pool. The house and the pool were fitted with electric light. One was a novelty, the other was an innovation. The pool was swarmed with bathing parties. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was a frequent visitor to the pool. He was then a junior at the Allahabad Bar. Neither Motilal nor Tej Bahadur knew swimming; but while the latter sat on the first step in fifteen inches of water, refusing absolutely to go forward even to the second step and shouting loudly if any one tried to move him, the former could manage to go the length of the pool with set teeth and violent and exhausting effort. This difference in the physical character was later on illustrated in their political outlook. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru throughout his life remained a liberal, sitting on the first step of Indian National Congress in fifteen inches of nationalism and absolutely refusing to move forward even to the second step of non-violent non-co-

operation and shouting loudly if any one tried to drag him into the extremist fold. On the other hand, Motilal Nehru crossed the entire swimming pool of the Indian National Congress with set teeth and violent effort which transformed him overnight from an extreme loyalist to the extremist-nationalist on the right hand of Mahatma Gandhi. Sir Tej has remained an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi only from other side of the swimming pool !

C. F. Andrews, a great friend of Motilal, describes his recollections of Anand Bhawan in warm and friendly words :

"It was there, at Anand Bhawan, that I first met Motilal Nehru more than thirty years ago. A family residence of this type is like the ancestral house of a clan in the Highlands of Scotland. Everyone who is a near relative, and also the servants who grow up in it, regard themselves as members of the joint family. The memory of my first meeting with Pandit Motilal Nehru is very dim today; but I can easily picture the house where he lived and his very handsome appearance. Delhi and Allahabad were closely associated in their intellectual life in those times. There was a close fellowship also between Moslems and Hindus within the different intellectual groups. The common Urdu language, in which very great pride was taken by both Hindus and Moslems, bound them together. The Western culture, which had come also into fashion, was another link common to

this very small circle of English-educated people. The members of leading families met continually, especially at marriages. My own educational work soon brought me into touch with Allahabad and also with Anand Bhawan.

"Motilal Nehru was from the first quite lavish in his hospitality. More and more he had adopted, after each visit to Europe, the expensive standard of living common in the West. Exceedingly foolish stories about his Western habits were spread widely over the north of India, which were ridiculous to those who knew him in his own house ; for whatever he did in this direction, as events proved, was merely on the surface, and could be thrown off at a moment's notice. He frankly admired the character of the Englishmen he met who had been trained in the English public schools. Therefore he sent his only son to Harrow, and never regretted that action. But all through his life he was far too deeply wedded to his own country and its traditions to make him ever forget his birthright."

III. A TUSSELE WITH ORTHODOXY

When Mahatma Gandhi was at work as a stretcher-bearer in South Africa during the Boer War, Motilal Nehru was enjoying a holiday in Europe. But these were the days when crossing the seas was regarded an impure practice by the high priests of Hindudom. Consequently, Motilal's visit to Europe generated a storm among the Kashmiri Brahmins in India.

Motilal Nehru was asked to perform *prayashchit* or purification ceremony on his return. But he solidly refused to do so.

"Some years previously," says Jawaharlal, "another Kashmiri Brahmin, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar, who later became a president of the Congress, had gone to England to be called to the bar. On his return the orthodox members of the community had refused to have anything to do with him and he was an outcast, although he performed the *prayashchit* ceremony!"

This was a terrible lesson. So Motilal went a step further and cleared the road for the younger generation. He refused to go through any ceremony at all. He would not yield to the orthodox dictatorship. He did not submit even outwardly to any type of purification. Motilal maintained an aggressive and rather disdainful attitude. A great deal of heat was generated. But the strong man won the day. A great number of Kashmiris joined Motilal and the orthodox dictatorship was exterminated. Ever since the wall has been permanently broken down.

"Large numbers of Kashmiri young men and girls," says Jawaharlal, "have visited Europe and America for their studies and no question has arisen of their performing any ceremonies on their return."

Due to the initiative of Motilal many other restrictions have been swept away. Inter-dining with non-Brahmins, Hindus and Moslems, is quite common. The system of

purdah has also disappeared among the Kashmiri women.

In May, 1905, Motilal again went to Europe accompanied by his wife, son and daughter. A vacancy was found for Jawaharlal at Harrow. Motilal then went to the Continent. After some months he returned to India with his wife and daughter.

IV. THE PATH TO POLITICS

The path to politics is very thorny in a subordinate and subject country, and Motilal brooded deep and long, before he threw a gauntlet to the British. He balanced the independence of his motherland against his personal comfort before he quitted the ivory tower of domestic happiness built laboriously in the rose-garden of a prosperous practice at the bar.

India was drawing Motilal slowly and steadily into the whirlpool of politics. He made a start with the moderate group. Many of them were his colleagues. He presided over a provincial conference and strongly criticised the extremists. He became president of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee. He was present at Surat in 1907 when the Congress broke up in utter confusion. Later it emerged purely as a moderate group to which Motilal was already attached.

It was in those days that H. W. Nevins stayed with Motilal as his guest at Allahabad. In his book on India he refers to Motilal as being "moderate in everything except his

generosity ”.

“ This,” says Jawaharlal, “ was a very wrong estimate, for father was never moderate in anything except his politics. . . . ”

But slowly and steadily his nature drove him from even that remnant of moderation. Motilal was a man of strong feelings and strong passions. He had tremendous pride and great strength of will. Consequently, he was far from being a moderate.

In 1907 and 1908 Motilal belonged to the moderate group. He was bitter against extremists. But he admired Tilak. Nevertheless, “ he was a moderate of moderates,” says his son.

Motilal was a moderate, because he had his grounding in law and constitutionalism. He took a lawyer's view of politics. He had an honest hatred for the confused thinking of the politicians. Hard and extreme words led nowhere. He wanted words to be followed by action. And the latter was missing in politicians. He saw no effective action in prospect. The boycott movements did not appeal to him. These did not seem to carry matters far. Besides he disliked the religious background of nationalism.

“ He did not look back,” says Jawaharlal, “ to a revival in India of ancient times.”

Motilal had no sympathy with old customs and traditions. He looked to the West. The Western progress attracted him. He advocated an association with England. The moderates represented an advanced social-

outlook. But they were a mere handful on the top. And they had no touch with the masses. They only advocated petty social reforms to weaken custom and tradition.

"Having cast his lot with the moderates," says Jawaharlal, "father took an aggressive line. Most of the extremists, apart from a few leaders in Bengal and Poona, were young men and it irritated him to find that these youngsters dared to go their own way. Impatient and intolerant of opposition and not suffering people whom he considered fools gladly he pitched into them and hit them whenever he could."

While still in England, Jawaharlal read an article written by his father. Loyalism annoyed the Cambridge graduate greatly. So he wrote rather an impertinent letter to his father. Jawaharlal suggested that the British Government was greatly pleased with his activities. This was just the kind of suggestion which would make him wild. And he was very angry. Motilal almost thought of asking his son to return from England immediately.

Chapter Three

A WALK INTO THE WHIRLWIND

It was not long before Motilal Nehru left his cosy nest of moderation and walked forth into the whirlwind of aggressive politics.

When the First World War broke out, Motilal was a member of the U.P. Defence Board. The Indian Defence Force was treated very differently from the European Defence Force. Here was a good reason for non-co-operation. Just then came Mrs. Annie Besant's internment.

"In the excitement of the moment," says Jawaharlal, "I managed to get the committee members—they included my father, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and other moderate leaders—to agree to cancel our meeting and all other work in connection with the Defence Force as a protest against the Government's action."

It was Motilal Nehru's first act of aggression. And it was made possible by the enthusiasm of his son. Motilal and Jawaharlal acted and reacted upon each other. Thus writes John Gunther :

"His father Motilal was a very important influence on Jawaharlal, which is not surprising considering how sensitive Jawaharlal was and considering the vitality of the old man."

Many important men have had great mothers ; to find a great father passing on his qualities to his son is more unusual. The equation in the Nehru family worked both ways ; Jawaharlal influenced Motilal almost as much as *vice versa*. One is reminded of the psycho-analytic phenomenon of counter-transference, wherein the patient attracts and influences the doctor, instead of the doctor attracting the patient."

I. MAKING UP THE MIND

Motilal, under the influence of his son and through his own convictions, gradually drifted away from the orthodox fold. His nature rebelled against submission to a foreign authority. But even then he was not fascinated by the extremist leaders. Their language jarred upon him. He could not commit himself to any forward line even though he found the moderate tactics no good. He wanted something effective to be done. He was anxious to find a solution for the Hindu-Moslem problem before he would jump into the fire of death-defying extremism.

"If this was found," says Jawaharlal, "then he was prepared to go with the youngest of us."

Motilal was pleased with the joint Congress-League scheme. It was drafted at the house of Motilal in 1916. It opened the way to a joint effort. And Motilal was prepared to go ahead in the very teeth of the moderate group. Final break came during the visit of

Edwin Montague, the Secretary of State for India. A special provincial conference was held at Lucknow over which Motilal Nehru presided.

"The moderates," says Jawaharlal, "expecting that this conference would adopt a strong line against the Montague-Chelmsford proposals, boycotted the conference. Later they also boycotted the special session of the Congress held to consider the proposals. Since then they have been out of the Congress."

When Motilal joined hands with the active nationalists, the moderates had already dropped out. They kept away from the Congress sessions and public gatherings. They did not present their views and fight for them. It struck Jawaharlal as peculiarly undignified. He thought it unbecoming in public workers. Sastri was the only moderate leader who kept up the fight.

II. DRIFT TOWARDS EXTREMISM

Politics deprived Anand Bhawan of its peaceful atmosphere. Father watched his son painfully drifting towards extremism. He imagined that his son was heading straight towards violence.

The end of the World War found India in a state of suppressed excitement. Industrialism had spread. A capitalist class had grown. There was an expectation of great political changes. Political agitation was working itself to a head. People talked of self-determination. Unrest was visible among

the masses. The soldiers were no more subservient robots. Among the Moslems there was resentment over the treatment of Turkey. Mahatma Gandhi led the Khilafat Movement and tried to cement a union between Hindus and Moslems.

Rowlatt Bills were passed to suppress the people. A wave of anger greeted the Bills. Even the moderates opposed the measures. There was a universal opposition. Mahatma Gandhi formed the Satyagraha Sabha and launched a vigorous campaign. Jawaharlal joined the sabha, but Motilal was dead against the idea.

"For many days," says Jawaharlal, "there was this mental conflict, and because both of us felt that big issues were at stake involving a complete upsetting of our lives, we tried hard to be as considerate to each other as possible. I wanted to lessen his obvious suffering if I could, but I had no doubt in my mind that I had to go the way of satyagraha. Both of us had a distressing time, and night after night I wandered about alone, tortured in mind and trying to grope my way out. Father—I discovered later—actually tried sleeping on the floor to find out what it was like, as he thought that this would be my lot in prison."

Motilal invited Gandhiji to Allahabad. They had long confidential talks. As a result Gandhiji advised Jawaharlal not to precipitate matters. Jawaharlal was told not to do anything that might upset his father.

But the things soon took a different turn.

There were hartals all over India to oppose the Rowlatt Bills. There were police firings to oppose the hartals. There was mob violence to oppose the police. There were military massacres to oppose the solitary mob violence. And the net result was the tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar.

The martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh, innocent victims of British autocracy, irrigated the foundations of the edifice of independence with their blood, and the agony of Amritsar was shrieked round the globe. It was the agony that excruciated Motilal, strengthened the extremists and sounded the death-knell of the liberals and the moderates in the Indian National Congress.

III. AMRITSAR AND AFTER

Terrible indignity of the martial law prevailed in the Punjab. The Punjab was isolated. It was cut off from the rest of India. A thick veil seemed to cover it. There was hardly any news. There was no traffic to and from the Punjab. As soon as the martial law was withdrawn, Motilal Nehru rushed to the Punjab. And here he met his friend C. F. Andrews. Let Andrews carry the tale forward :

“When I first came to know him intimately was in the autumn of 1919 at Amritsar and Lahore, where we met together during the first days of the Congress enquiry into the Punjab disturbances- and the acts which had been committed under martial law.

"His son, Jawaharlal Nehru, had come up alone, in the first instance, immediately after martial law had been withdrawn and the entry into the Punjab had become possible. We had lived together for some time at Harkishen Lal's house in Lahore before any one else arrived. Each day, when we came back from one disturbed area after another, we used to compare notes in the evening. Then Motilal Nehru himself came, as soon as he was free from his engagements. Mahatma Gandhi soon followed, when the order against him was withdrawn. It was painful to witness how shock after shock went home, when they both examined, as trained lawyers, the evidence which we put before them. Some of the worst things that were done under martial law were not done in Amritsar or in Lahore, but in the Gujranwala district, in villages whose names even were quite unknown. It was a lesson that I never forget to notice how very carefully they sifted the evidence, and at once put aside as untrustworthy all that I had collected, at second hand, on hearsay only.

"Long before this enquiry was over, the more urgent call suddenly came to me to go out to Kenya and South Africa. I was very sorry to go away, but before I left the Punjab a golden opportunity had been given me of seeing at first hand those two leaders of India, as they then were, closely associated together in this common investigation on behalf of those who had suffered under martial law.

"That memorable year 1919, in Indian

history, changed once and for all the mode of life of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Before this time, as we have seen, he had made some of his closest friends in Europe, and also among the ruling classes in India who were British by race and tradition. He greatly admired that tradition, while holding himself free to criticise it. He had also many friends among the aristocracy of India. His whole mind had been steeped in law and constitutional government. Though he had been for some time a member of the Congress, he had always represented the right rather than the left. But Amritsar shook the very foundations of the faith on which he had built up hitherto; and when he presided over the National Congress, which was held at Amritsar that very year, 1919, he felt that the parting of the ways had come between him and his old liberal friends. Then, when at last the call came to join the non-co-operation movement, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, he was fully prepared to accept it. He did this slowly and deliberately, realising all the consequences which it involved.

“He would have been the first to acknowledge that, in his own home, there were those on both sides of the family—the women no less than men—who were eager to help him to make this great decision to join Mahatma Gandhi. Then, as soon as he had made it, the whole family became united. Jawaharlal's mother and wife and daughter took part in the struggle side by side with Motilal Nehru himself and his son.”

Motilal's presidentship of the Amritsar Congress during Christmas, 1919, will long be remembered. He issued a moving appeal to the moderate leaders. He invited the liberals to join that session because of the new situation created by the horrors of the martial law.

"The lacerated heart of the Punjab called to them," he wrote. Would they not answer the call? No, they did not. They refused to join the session, because they were too timid to do so. Their eyes were on the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and the spoils of office that awaited those who played in the hands of the British lion.

"This refusal," says Jawaharlal, "hurt father and widened the gulf between him and the liberals."

When his son was externed from Mussoorie in May, 1920, Motilal had some rough correspondence with Sir Harcourt Butler, the Governor of the United Provinces, whom he knew personally. As a result the order was rescinded. It was perhaps the last opportunity when Motilal used his moderate friendliness to over-influence his extremist politics.

Chapter Four

FROM WHIRLWIND TO WHIRLPOOL

The whirlwind of active politics did not hold Motilal Nehru for long. What he wanted was not merely active patriotism. He was itching for the war of independence. So straightway he leapt into the whirlpool of non-violent non-co-operation.

A special session of the Congress was held at Calcutta in the autumn of 1920. Lala Lajpat Rai presided. The entire old guard, including Lalaji and C. R. Das, were opposed to Gandhiji's resolution of non-co-operation. Of all the elder statesmen, Motilal alone stood like a rock by the side of Gandhiji. He was inevitably drawn to form of effective action, and the proposal did embody effective action, though not exactly on the lines of his thought.

I. COMING TO GRIPS

Motilal was continually grappling with the problem. He was coming to grips with bureaucracy. Non-co-operation meant a withdrawing from his legal practice. It meant a total break with his past life. And let us not forget that Motilal was approaching his sixtieth year. But the spirit of the Revolt of 1857 was pulsating in his veins. Any other man in his position would have shuddered.

According to Jawaharlal, it was a break from old political colleagues, from his profession, from the social life to which he had grown accustomed, and a giving up of many expensive habits which he had grown into.

Step by step Motilal marched forward. He threw in his lot whole-heartedly with the new movement. His anger was steadily accumulating. The bitterness of national humiliation at Jallianwala Bagh filled his heart. But when he joined the satyagraha movement, he was not swept away by the wave of enthusiasm. His emotion backed the reason of a lawyer's trained mind.

The tide of non-co-operation soon spread all over the country. The appeal for boycott of elections was remarkably successful. It was at the Calcutta session that Jinnah dropped out of the Congress. The moderates merged themselves with the Government and became ministers under the new scheme. Nevertheless the British authority was toppling down, although gaols were filled with political prisoners. The Government confessed that the initiative was with the "enemy"—the Congress. Motilal and Jawaharlal both were arrested. The popular slogan was: *Hindu-Mussulman ki jai!* Then suddenly Chauri-Chaura changed the history of the movement. There in February, 1922, people answered the atrocities of the police by setting the police-station on fire and burning half a dozen policemen. As a result Gandhiji suspended the movement of civil resistance.

Motilal was upset by the action of Gandhiji. So were many other statesmen. Soon there arose a struggle between the "changers" and "no-changers".

II. MOTILAL AND MAHATMAJI

Motilal, notwithstanding differences of approach to the singular ideology of struggle for freedom, stood as solidly and single-mindedly behind Mahatma Gandhi as Mahatma Gandhi, despite ideological differences, stood behind Jawaharlal.

"That humble and lonely figure," Motilal wrote about Mahatma Gandhi, "standing erect, on the firm footholds of faith unshakable and strength unconquerable, continues to send out to his countrymen his message of sacrifice and suffering for the motherland."

Motilal gave up his monarchship-of-easy-money at the bar for Mahatma Gandhi.

"Yet," says C. F. Andrews, "there was a marked difference from the very first that soon revealed itself. Motilal Nehru was quite obviously inclined to the right in all his actions and decisions. Even after he had joined the non-co-operation movement this continued. So, after the first flush of the new venture of non-co-operation was over and it became logically evident to him that he could win more power by entering the Central Legislative Assembly, he was prepared to do this along with his great friend C. R. Das of Bengal. He thus led materially to differ from Mahatma Gandhi. Those who followed the latter were

called no-changers. As a parallel organisation, the Swaraj Party was formed by Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das. The parliamentary methods of obstruction, which Parnell and his Irishmen had so brilliantly tried out at Westminster, were put into execution at Delhi.

"The next time I met Pandit Motilal Nehru was at Juhu, near Bombay, where Mahatma Gandhi was recovering from his very serious operation in the Sasson Hospital at Poona. He came and stayed at Juhu for some time in order to be near Mahatmaji and talk things over; and I had many opportunities of seeing the lighter side of his character as the two leaders together made great fun of one another. Mahatmaji was convalescent and recovering health. He was thus in a joking mood with everyone. The whole Nehru family was in residence at Juhu during those extraordinary days, while Motilal and Gandhi talked out—as it seemed to me, almost interminably—the pros and cons of 'council entry'. Neither convinced the other; but, meanwhile, in the intervals between these long conversations, I had got to know Pandit Motilal Nehru very much better than I had ever done before. I was also able to witness and appreciate his deep admiration for Mahatma Gandhi as a man. As a 'mahatma' he was far less interested in him; but that made everything between them more human. He would chaff Gandhi mercilessly and nothing pleased him better. I wish I could remember some of the jokes, which were of a very elementary

character, but they have quite passed from me. Just one I recollect, how he called Mahatma Gandhi 'a bit of a dandy' because of his spotlessly white khaddar! Behind all the merriment, however, was a firmness on both sides which became at times crucially painful because the two minds, so strongly dissimilar, would not always work together. Yet the affection between them became all the deeper because of their very differences."

The portrait drawn by Jawaharlal of his father is one of the finest descriptions in his *Autobiography*. "There was in him," he writes, "a strength of personality and a measure of kingliness. In any gathering he was present he would inevitably be the centre and the hub. Whatever the place he sat at table, it would become, as an eminent English judge said later, the head of the table. He was neither meek nor mild. Consciously imperious, he created great loyalty as well as bitter opposition. It was difficult to feel neutral about him; one had to like him or dislike him. With a broad forehead, tight lips, and a determined chin he had marked resemblance to the busts of the Roman Emperors in the museums in Italy. There was a magnificence about him and a grand manner, which is sadly to seek in this world of today.

"I remember," he adds, "showing Gandhiji a photograph of him, where he had no moustache, and till then Gandhiji had always seen him with a fine moustache. He started

almost on seeing this photograph and gazed long upon it ; for the absence of the moustache brought out the hardness of the mouth and chin ; and he said with a somewhat dry smile that now he realised what he had to contend against. The face was softened, however, by the eyes and by the lines that frequent laughter had made. But sometimes the eyes glittered."

"In all my own memories of him," says Andrews, "this gentler side predominated, and I remember him chiefly by his lavish fund of humour and his eagerness to engage in a bout of wit and merriment especially with Gandhiji himself. Yet no one admired Gandhi more than Motilal Nehru."

III. PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAMME

Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal and C. R. Das formed a political triangle in the Indian National Congress. Idealistically Motilal sided with Mahatmaji but psychologically he was on the side of C. R. Das. Thus Motilal served as a hyphen between the other two and abridged the political gulf.

Motilal and C. R. Das favoured entry into legislatures for pushing up the national struggle within the British wheels. In 1920 in boycotting the elections Motilal had subordinated his view-point to that of Gandhiji. But now the conditions had changed. And a change of programme was essential.

There grew up a great friendship between Motilal and C. R. Das. It was something more

than a political companionship. They had warmth and intimacy between them. There were no barriers between the two. They took each other to heart. Motilal was nine years older than Das, but he was healthier and stronger of the two. Although they both had a legal background, they differed in many ways. Das was a poet with an emotional outlook and a religious background. Motilal was a prosaic man with a practical outlook and a great organising ability. The two fitted into each other and made an effective union. This friendship made the success of the swarajists a practical proposition.

"Desbandu Das tried," says Jawaharlal, "soon after my discharge from prison to convert me to the swarajist creed. I did not succumb to his advocacy, though I was by no means clear as to what I should do. It is curious and rather remarkable, but characteristic of him, that my father, who was at the time very keen on the Swaraj Party, never tried to press me or influence me in that direction. It was obvious that he would have been very pleased if I joined him in his campaign, but with extraordinary consideration for me, he left me to myself as far as this subject was concerned."

At last Mahatmaji gave way; and at the next elections the Swaraj Party, as it was called, was fully organised and everywhere carried the polls. When Motilal Nehru was chosen to be Leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly at New Delhi, as the head of the

Swaraj Party, he felt himself once more entirely in his own element. He was no longer like a fish out of water. His whole legal training and his knowledge of assemblies had all along made him anxious to give a battle to the imperial Government, using its own weapons to defeat it. He was quite certain that he could bring it down to its knees.

In his opinion he was more or less justified ; for the Government suffered outwardly defeat after defeat at his hands. Indeed, on all the larger issues, it could only rely on its own official and nominated members, and these, by themselves, were not sufficient to form a majority. But his triumphs proved to be Pyrrhic victories after all, because as soon as ever any Government measure was defeated it was at once certificated by the Viceroy. There was also a majority ready in the Upper House to reverse the decision of the Assembly.

A subtle danger, meanwhile, attacked the Swaraj Party. For every possible inducement was given to its members to serve on one committee after another, or take this post or that, bringing certain emoluments with them. When these were accepted, the full force of a revolutionary method of procedure was continually frustrated.

During these difficult years, Motilal Nehru undertook almost alone the immensely arduous task of drawing up a form of constitution, by which India should have full dominion status within the British Commonwealth. His son, Jawaharlal, could not endure the limited terms

on which this constitution was being framed, because they did not make absolutely clear that India's full independence was the goal. A considerable amount of friction arose between father and son on this issue and a compromise was reached at last with great difficulty, whereby the offer to accept this "dominion status" constitution would expire at the end of the year 1929.

Chapter Five

THE LEADER OF LEADERS

Motilal Nehru may be looked upon as the leader of leaders. He was destined to make his mark among the topmost figures of his country. Even though he took to politics rather late in the day, his progress was brisk, and coming from behind the curtain of the moderate fold, he soon took reins of the most revolutionary elements in the country. Mahatma Gandhi valued his views far above that of anybody else.

When Motilal joined the satyagraha movement, he relinquished his luxurious life at a single stroke. He disposed of much of his furniture to get rid of superfluities and also to raise some money. Horses and carriages fell under the auctioneer's hammer. Some of the property was seized by the police. After giving up practice Motilal refused to accept any briefs. Once a client offered him a lakh of rupees as fees for a case, but he looked disdainfully at the money.

"Well, *beti*," said Motilal to his little daughter, "do you think it would be right for me to accept this case?"

"No, father," she said, "I don't think you should."

"I am sorry," he said to his client, "you see even my daughter objects."

When Motilal undertook the swarajist movement, it was purely from impersonal motives. He discouraged careerists and opportunists. Motilal declared in unmistakable terms that he would not hesitate "to cut off a diseased limb" from the party. C. F. Andrews pays a magnificent tribute to his leadership :

"Looking back after all these years, it has now become evident to thinking men all over the world that the good fight which Motilal Nehru fought was carried through to the end with a chivalry and courtesy towards his opponents that made his cause truly great and noble. His name is honoured today in India, not only by his fellow-countrymen, but also by every European. In his own career, as a statesman he stands out more prominently than ever, as one who brought the debates of the Central Assembly at Delhi to a higher parliamentary level than has ever been reached before or since. Certainly no one has been so great as he, as Leader of the Opposition. In this, and in a thousand other ways, he has been one of the makers of modern India."

Among the leading legal luminaries as well as the intrepid Indian patriots of this century, Motilal Nehru occupied an exalted place, in spite of the fact that his entry into public life was late. During the twelve years (1919 to 1931) as a trusted lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhi, he made a magnificent contribution towards the making of the politi-

cal destiny of India. How "the pearl among the Pandits", who always appeared as if he had just left the shop of a tailor, began to wear coarse khaddar and take pride in donning a Gandhi cap, was something astounding. But how the Pandit, the dweller of a palace, who attended the Coronation Durbar at Delhi in 1911 as the guest of a Lieutenant-Governor, ten years later, cheerfully and bravely bore the sufferings of gaol life, was a great change, attributable to the Mahatma—the Miracle Man of the Modern Times.

Motilal Nehru was gifted with an extraordinary brain and had the vision of a seer. A leader of tremendous drive, he had remarkable organising ability and was possessed of quick repartee. As the Leader of Opposition in the Central Assembly, from 1924 to 1927, he was at his best when he spoke on legal and constitutional questions. An ornament to the Assembly, he was greatly looked up to by the Treasury Benches as well; and though he was the busiest politician of his time, he found time to do his legislative work more regularly than many members of his own party—the Swaraj Party.

His idealism was tempered by robust realism and he never lost sight of the difficulties and complexities of the Indian problem. For instance, he held "Dominion status can easily become more than independence, if we have sanction to back it. Independence can easily become a farce, if it lacks sanction. What is

in a name if we have the reality. A rose smells just as sweet whether you know it by that name or any other. . . . Our destiny is freedom, the form and extent of which will depend upon the time when and the circumstances under which it comes. . . . The masses want bread. They have no time to make experiments and no use for theories and dogmas imported from abroad." These words are from Motilal Nehru's historic presidential address at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, held in December, 1928.

I. INDIA ON THE MARCH

In the autumn of 1923, Motilal went to Nabha to help Jawaharlal who was interned by the state authorities, because he defied the state order in going to observe the atrocities committed on the Sikhs during a satyagraha which they had launched.

Motilal knew something about the Indian states. And, therefore, he was considerably upset. At that time he knew only the fact of arrest. Nothing else was known to him. In his distress he telegraphed to the Viceroy for the news. Difficulties were put in the way of Motilal visiting Nabha. But he was allowed at last to interview Jawaharlal in prison. He could not be of any help to his son, because the latter refused to defend himself. Jawaharlal begged his father to return to Allahabad, and not to worry about him. So Motilal did return to Allahabad, but he left behind a lawyer to watch the proceedings.

In the summer of 1927 Motilal went to Europe. Jawaharlal met him at Venice. Motilal Nehru with his wife, son and younger daughter paid a visit to Moscow. They attended in November the tenth anniversary of the Soviet. It was a brief visit only for three or four days. But they were glad that they went. Even a glimpse was worth while. It could not teach them much about Russia, but they got a good background for studying communism.

"To my father," says Jawaharlal, "all such Soviet and collectivist ideas were wholly novel. His whole training had been legal and constitutional, and he could not easily get out of the framework. But he was definitely impressed by what he saw in Moscow."

Motilal was in Moscow when the announcement about the Simon Commission was made. He read the news in a Moscow sheet. Returning from Moscow, Motilal appeared in the Privy Council in London in an Indian appeal. There Sir John Simon was his colleague in the same case. It was an old *zamindari* case.

It was not long before Sir Simon visited India and everywhere he was greeted with black flags. The Government opposed the popular demonstration and the policeman's baton was freely made use of. Lala Lajpat Rai fell victim to the lathi charge at Lahore and many leaders received injuries including the distinguished son of Motilal.

Jawaharlal was at Lucknow. He thought that the news would upset his father. So he telephoned to him that he was well. But Moti-

lal was nevertheless upset. He found it difficult to sleep. The last train had gone. So Motilal started by car. He had some accident on the way. Nevertheless he reached Lucknow at 5 a.m. covering a journey of one hundred and forty-six miles but utterly tired and exhausted.

II. CALCUTTA CONGRESS

The Calcutta Congress was held towards the end of 1928. Motilal presided over it.

"He was," says Jawaharlal, "full of the All-Parties Conference and of his report to it and wanted to push this through the Congress. To this he knew that I was not agreeable, because I was not prepared to compromise on the independence issue, and this irritated him. We did not argue about the matter much, but there was a definite feeling of mental conflict between us, an attempt to pull different ways. Difference of opinion we had often had before, vital differences which had kept us in different political camps. But I do not think that at any previous or subsequent occasion the tension had been so great. Both of us were rather unhappy about it."

Matters came to a head at Calcutta. Motilal made it clear that if he could not have the majority for his resolution in favour of the All-Parties Report, he would refuse to preside over the session. This was a perfectly reasonable course to adopt. This had a good effect. A compromise formula was announced, but it fell through. The main resolution was adopted as

desired by Motilal, but it was laid down that if the British Government did not grant dominion status within a year, the Congress will revert to full independence.

"It was," says Jawaharlal, "an offer of a year's grace and a polite ultimatum."

The chairmanship of Motilal was followed by the chairmanship of his son the next year to preside over the Lahore Congress, where the resolution for complete independence was passed.

"My election," says Jawaharlal, "was indeed a great honour and a great responsibility for me; it was unique in that a son was immediately following his father in the presidential chair."

III. THE SALT MARCH

The Lahore Congress was followed by civil disobedience movement. Mahatma Gandhi notified to the Government that the salt tax was unjust and that it should be scrapped. The British authorities refused to budge an inch. So salt became a word of magic and everybody began to prepare salt in defiance of the Government.

Motilal and his son went to see Gandhiji on his historic salt march. They met him at Jambusar with his pilgrim band. They spent a few hours with him there. Then they saw him stride away in his journey to the next stage in the historic march.

"At Jambusar," says Jawaharlal, "my father had decided, in consultation with Gandhiji, to

make a gift of his old house in Allahabad to the nation and rename it Swaraj Bhawan. On his return to Allahabad he made the announcement, and actually handed over to the Congress people; part of the large property being converted into a hospital. He was unable to go through the legal formalities at that time, and, a year and a half later, I created a trust of the property, in accordance with his wishes."

It was not long before Motilal, his son, daughter-in-law, wife and other relatives found themselves in prison along with other leaders and thousands of workers.

Motilal was in very poor health when he was sent up to the gaol. And there he was kept in conditions of extreme discomfort. Monsoon had set in and it was impossible to keep dry in the Naini Prison. Sometimes he had fever.

"At night," says Jawaharlal, "it was a problem where to put father's bed, in that ten-foot-by-five-foot verandah attached to our cell, to avoid the rain."

On August 10, 1930, Motilal, his son and Mahmud were sent by a special train from Naini to Poona. Although the train did not stop at big stations, people were present at every station to greet them who had somehow received the secret news of their arrival. They had come to see Gandhiji but they were not allowed to see him for two days. It rather got on the nerves of Motilal. At last all the prominent Congressmen were brought together and the conference with Sapru and Jayakar lasted three days.

The strain of the conference exhausted Motilal and he got fever. The Government of Bombay tried to offer every comfort. Jawaharlal has an amusing anecdote :

“Colonel Martin, the Superintendent, asked father what kind of food he would like. Father told him that he took very simple and light food, and then he enumerated his various requirements from early morning tea in bed to dinner at night. (In Naini we used to get food for him daily from home.) The list father gave in all innocence and simplicity consisted certainly of light foods, but it was impressive. Very probably at the Ritz or Savoy it would have been considered simple ordinary food, as father himself was convinced that it was. But in Yervada it seemed strange and far away and most inappropriate. Mahmud and I were highly amused to watch the expression on Colonel Martin’s face as he listened to father’s numerous and expensive requirements in the way of food. For a long time he had in his keeping the greatest and most famous of India’s leaders, and all that he had required in the way of food was goat’s milk, dates, and perhaps oranges occasionally. The new type of leader that had come to him was very different.”

IV. THE LAST JOURNEY

Motilal lived and died like a lion. Even in the prison he was respected for his leonine character. He fought for India’s independence even when he was ill and his last imprisonment

made matters worse. His condition soon deteriorated and he was released on account of serious illness. Till the last minute his will-power remained and he kept body and mind together. Almost all the Congress leaders were in Allahabad for consultations. Leaders came to see him in twos and threes in the mornings and evenings. Motilal insisted on sitting up in an easy chair to receive them. His face was swollen. So he sat massively and expressionless. As the friends came to see him, there was a glitter in his eyes.

"There he sat like an old lion," says Jawaharlal, "mortally wounded and with his physical strength almost gone, but still very leonine and kingly."

C. F. Andrews mentions three causes of his death :

"(1) Long before he took part in the struggle he had been afflicted for very many years with an acute form of asthma, which caused him great physical pain and put a severe strain upon his heart. But his utterly resolute temperament would not allow him for a moment to stand by while others suffered, even though he was already to all intents and purposes an invalid and had reached his seventieth year.

"(2) In the gaol, his illness rapidly grew worse, and it was obvious that prison life was doing him untold injury, because he could get no proper treatment for his asthma and heart trouble, under gaol conditions. Yet he became immediately angry if any one suggested that

he should be released because of his infirmities. He went to the length of sending a telegram to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, saying that he did not wish to claim any exemption. But on the doctors' imperative orders he was discharged after exactly ten weeks' imprisonment.

"(3) Then came the fifth arrest of his only son, Jawaharlal. The old father pulled himself together and declared to everyone present that he was going to be ill no longer. For a time his indomitable spirit prevailed; but after a short period the blood came back into his sputum in greater quantities than ever. Therefore, he was urged to go to Calcutta for the purpose of taking a sea voyage along with a friend who was a doctor; but his condition so quickly grew worse that he could not make his journey any further than Calcutta. Yet even then his will was quite unconquerable, and he carried forward every part of his civil resistance just as before.

"He returned to Allahabad, and his son Jawaharlal was discharged a little while before the others in order to be with him. Mahatma Gandhi had also been discharged at Yervada and many others among the Congress leaders. These came to Allahabad and were able to meet him, one by one, for the last time before his death."

"I am going soon," he said to Mahatma Gandhi, "and I shall not be here to see swaraj. But I know that you have won it."

The end came on February 6th, 1931. For many millions in every part of India, it seemed

as if a dear personal friend had been taken away from them. His son writes:

"I was dazed all that day, hardly realising what had happened, and a succession of events and large crowds kept me from thinking. Great crowds in Lucknow, gathered together at brief notice—the swift dash from Lucknow to Allahabad sitting by the body, wrapped in our national flag, and with a big flag flying above—the arrival at Allahabad, and the huge crowds that had gathered for miles to pay homage to his memory. There were some ceremonies at home, and then the last journey to the Ganga with a mighty concourse of people. As evening fell on the river-bank on that winter day, the great flames leapt up and consumed that body which had meant so much to us, who were close to him, as well as to millions in India. Gandhiji said a few moving words to the multitude and then all of us crept silently home. The stars were out and shining brightly when he returned, lonely and desolate."

Messages came pouring in from every side—from those who had been his most stalwart opponents in the Assembly, from the Viceroy and Lady Irwin, as well as from those dear companions who had stood side by side with him in the civil resistance campaign.

"This tremendous volume of goodwill and sympathy," wrote Jawaharlal, "took away somewhat the sting from our sorrow; but it was, above all, the wonderfully soothing and healing presence of Gandhiji that helped my mother and all of us to face that crisis in our lives."

V. THE MIGHTY MAN

Motilal Nehru enjoyed India-wide reputation as a sound and brilliant lawyer and as a Congress leader he was one of the greatest figures of this country. It can be safely maintained that by his intellectual powers and personal gifts he could outshine the most eminent European statesman of his day. In fighting for the freedom of his country he counted no sacrifice too great. The ideal that he has bequeathed to us can never perish.

Towards the end of 1926, during an electioneering campaign, in reply to the query of a press reporter of the United Provinces as to whether he was a vegetarian or not, Motilal Nehru remarked, "But for half-a-dozen eggs which I took this morning it would have been rather difficult for me to tackle hecklers like you." At this candid and unexpected reply the reporter got dumbfounded and could not put further questions.

Once in a crowded open-air meeting, held at Lahore in support of Diwan Chaman Lal's candidature for the Central Legislative Assembly, while answering an inconvenient question of a bitter opponent of the Congress, Motilal gave a considerable shock to the religious susceptibilities of a section of his audience by declaring, "Let alone the *Vedas*, I do not believe in the Divine Revelation of any scripture, whatsoever. Of course, as codes of moral guidance almost all the religious books are quite good. But to say that God speaks to man, is something beyond my grasp."

The foregoing may not be entirely to the taste of some of the engineers of souls, but Motilal derived satisfaction from a sort of social but "unspiritual" religion. He never believed in chloroforming his senses with a cloud of superstitious dogma; nor did he ever care for the threats of eternal damnation. On the contrary, he held that "the aim of all education and progress is to develop the collective instinct in man; to teach him to co-operate with his neighbour and to make him feel that his individual good depends on the good of society as a whole. Only thus can the selfish and individualistic instincts be suppressed and the energy of mankind be diverted from mutual competition to co-operation for the common welfare. Religion as practised today is, however, the greatest separatist force. It puts artificial barriers between man and man, and prevents the development of healthy and co-operative national life. Not content with its reactionary influence on social matters, it has invaded the domain of politics and economics and affects every aspect of our life. Its association with politics has been to the good of neither. Religion has been degraded and politics has sunk into the mire." Thus spoke Motilal Nehru at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, held in December, 1928.

PART II

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[A Political Study]

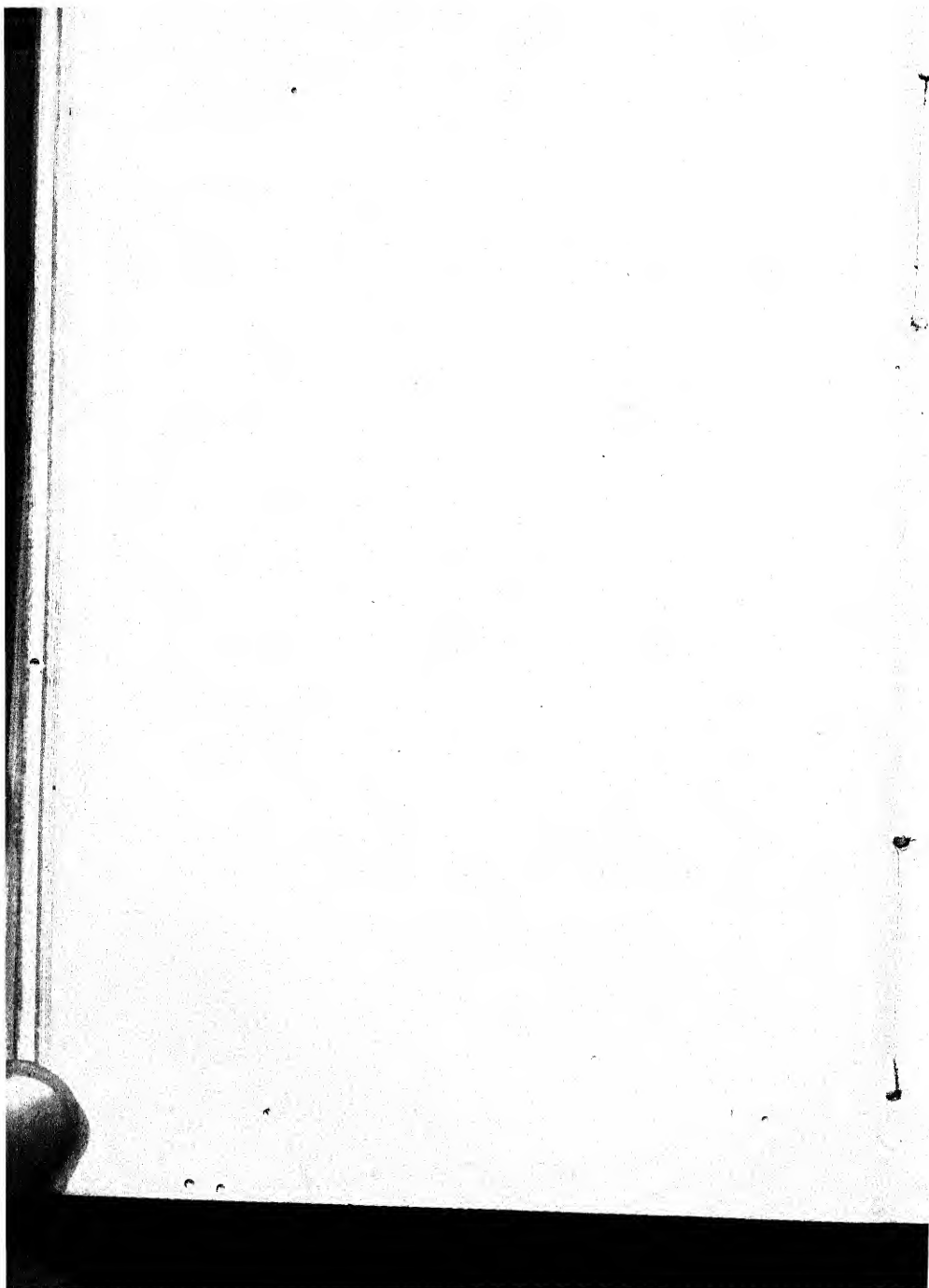
*I know no figure in contemporary
politics of greater mobility than he.*

—HAROLD LAKSI



*Now that we are a free nation,
we should all be ready to face
our task. There is no reason to be
afraid of the future. The prospect
is not too rosy for the whole world,
including India, but it would be
folly to be pessimistic.*

Jawaharlal Nehru



Chapter One

THE SON OF SUCCESS

Jawaharlal Nehru saw the light of the day on November 14, 1889. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, the child was what is called in literature "a son of success". Motilal had everything that money could buy when Jawaharlal appeared to light up the house of the Nehrus. He was the only child of his parents for the eleven years of existence.

I. CHILDHOOD

The childhood of Jawaharlal was sheltered one. He was fond of listening to the talks of the grown-ups. These talks usually dealt with the insolence of Anglo-Indians.

"Whenever an Indian hit back," says Jawaharlal, "I was glad."

Sometimes Indians did hit back. The cousins of Jawaharlal always did. But little Nehru had no feeling against individual Englishmen. He had English governesses. He fondled with the English friends of his father. He admired the English but not the Anglo-Indians, who were rather arrogant in those days.

Jawaharlal admired father tremendously. But Motilal was a strong man. And the boy have had plenty of thrashing. Therefore, the child was mightily afraid of the daddy.

But the child was never afraid of his mother. She never beat him. She was *petite* and short of stature. He admired her beauty. He loved her amazingly small hands. "Soon I was almost as tall," he says, "as she was and felt more of an equal with her."

His early confidant was Mubarak Ali, a Moslem *munshi* of his father. He had passed through the thick and thin of the Revolt of 1857 and used to tell anecdotes to little Nehru which the child very much liked. He was also fond of stories from the Hindu epics. But of religion he had a very hazy notion.

"It seemed to be a women's affair." Now unluckily it has become the politician's affair!

The child was interested in holidays. But most of all he was interested in his own birthday. This was a day of great excitement for him. He was weighed against wheat and rice which were distributed to the poor. He arrayed himself in beautiful clothes. He received presents. Later in the day there was a party.

"My chief grievance was," he says, "that my birthday came so rarely. Indeed I tried to start an agitation for more frequent birthdays!"

The innocent political agitator was already in the making.

II. BOYHOOD

In May, 1905, when Jawaharlal was fifteen, he set sail for England along with his parents and the baby sister. At Dover he read of the Japanese victory over Russia and was in high

humour.

The boy was fortunate in finding a vacancy at Harrow. His parents returned home. He played and enjoyed himself. His interests were wider than those of the English boys. He read books and newspapers while the English lads had nothing to talk about except their cricket.

"I remember," he says, "writing to my father how dull most of the English boys were. . . ."

Paramjit Singh, son of the then Maharaja of Kapurthala, was his class-fellow. He was a complete misfit and made himself a butt of laughter. Boys made fun of him. This irritated him greatly. Sometimes he used to tell them what he would do to them if they came to Kapurthala! A good example of state princes' pride and punishment.

Leaving Harrow, Jawaharlal went up to Cambridge, Trinity College, in October, 1907. Three years he was at Cambridge. He took the Natural Science Tripos. His subjects were Chemistry, Botany and Geology. He had to join the college debating club called the Magpie and Stump. But he was not interested in speaking. A member not speaking for the whole term had to pay fine.

"Often I paid the fine," says Jawaharlal.

Master Nehru left Cambridge in 1910 after taking his degree. He was moderately successful in the Science Tripos and got second-class honours. Then he got through the Bar examinations and returned to India, in the

summer of 1912. As he landed in Bombay, he says, he was a bit of a prig with little to commend him.

III. YOUTH

When Jawaharlal arrived in India, Tilak was in gaol. The Congress was a moderate group. Jawaharlal went to the Bankipore Congress as a delegate in 1912. It was very much an English-knowing upper-class affair. Morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence. Essentially it was a social gathering. There was no political excitement.

Jawaharlal took to law. But law did not enthuse him. He tried to indulge in hunting but like Buddha it left him cold. His reputation was bloodless. He felt much dissatisfied with life. He joined Gokhale's Servants of India Society. Here he found "straight and single-minded and continuous work".

Then there came the First World War. And it absorbed attention. Two Home Leagues were started, one by Lokamanya Tilak, the other by Mrs. Annie Besant. Young Nehru joined the both! But he favoured the woman.

When Annie Besant was arrested by the Government, he got his father, Sapru, Chintamani and others to suspend work of the U.P. Defence Board of which they formed the committee. Thus began the story of non-violent non-co-operation before Mahatma Gandhi had arrived on the scene.

The wedding of Jawaharlal took place in 1916 in the city of Delhi. That summer he

spent some months in Kashmir. He enjoyed the picturesque beauty of the snows immensely.

Jawaharlal reaped good harvest of experience out of the Rowlatt Bills and the Khilafat Movement. After the Jallianwala Bagh, Jawaharlal accompanied C. R. Das to assist him in making enquiries at Lahore. There he listened to the episodes of breath-taking atrocities during the martial law.

Then there came the Amritsar Congress over which the father of Jawaharlal presided.

"The Amritsar Congress was the first Gandhi Congress," says Jawaharlal.

IV. MANHOOD

In May, 1920, Jawaharlal took mother and wife to Mussoorie. Both of them were unwell. They stayed at the Savoy Hotel where the Afghan Mission was also putting up. The Afghans kept separately and did not mix with anybody. Nevertheless, Jawaharlal was warned by the police not to have any dealings with the Afghan Delegation. Such a thing was absurd, because Jawaharlal never had the slightest intention to do so. So he refused to give an undertaking. As a result he was externed from Mussoorie. That externment brought Jawaharlal into active contact with the peasants. And it proved a blessing in disguise. Later the order was rescinded.

Then Gandhiji launched the non-co-operation movement and thousands of heroes marched to the prisons. When the Prince of Wales came to India, empty streets greeted him,

Jawaharlal and his father were arrested along with other leaders. At last the movement was stopped by Gandhiji due to mob violence at Chauri-Chaura.

Jawaharlal was discharged from the Lucknow gaol in January, 1923, and in autumn of the same year he was badly interned at Nabha which brought him the typhus and kept him down for many weeks.

Chapter Two

PRINCES, PUPPETS AND PEOPLE

The princes in Indian states were puppets of the British Government for tyrannising over the people. Ever since Jawaharlal had had his first interlude at Nabha in the autumn of 1923, he carried on a ceaseless tussle with the state rulers and the Political Department.

Jawaharlal went to Nabha in 1923 to observe a Sikh religious agitation in which Sikhs were brutally wounded and killed by the state authorities. Jawaharlal and his companions were arrested and most mercilessly treated.

"This march of ours," says Jawaharlal, "down the streets of Jaito town reminded me forcibly of a dog being led on by a chain."

They were kept in a most insanitary cell infested with rats and insects and throughout the night their joint handcuff and the heavy chain kept them company. After a sham trial and unwarranted persecution they were released.

Jawaharlal was president of the All-India States Peoples' Conference ever since its inception, and his statements on the tyranny of the ruling princes make voluminous literature. His struggle against the princes only ended with the termination of princedom.

I. WARNING TO PRINCES

On March 5, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru issued the following statement to the press :

“In January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration in the Chamber on behalf of himself and his brother princes guaranteeing civil liberties and recognising the immediate need for representative institutions and efficient administration and judiciary. I welcomed this though I pointed out at the time that the proposals for constitutional changes do not go far enough and should be based on recognition of responsible government. I welcomed it chiefly because it represented a new approach and because of the assurance in regard to civil liberties which had been wholly or largely absent in most of the states. I believe some slight improvement did take place in regard to civil liberties in a few states but on the whole there has been no considerable change and I am constantly receiving reports of how civil liberties are being suppressed in many ways. This means that many of the princes are not keeping to their pledged word. All faith in what to say will vanish if action is at variance with assurance. This is a bad beginning for the big change that will inevitably come in the near future. I trust that all rulers of states will appreciate this and demonstrate to their people and to India that they mean what they say and are acting up to it.

“Civil liberties are important and are an essential prerequisite for any form of demo-

cratic government. But they do not take the place of representatives and responsible government. Therefore it must be remembered that the objective of the 'states' people is and must remain full responsible government. The same measure of democratic freedom must prevail in the states as in the rest of India. You cannot yoke together bullock with a swift horse. There is no difference between people of the states and the people of the provinces. Their future is one.

“Hyderabad State was not affected by the Chancellor's declaration and continues in most ways its medieval existence. The State Congress is still banned and generally speaking it is an astonishing example of the middle ages having strayed into the twentieth century.”

Chapter Three

LIFE AND LEADERSHIP

When Maulana Mohammed Ali became president of the Congress in December, 1923, he induced Jawaharlal to accept the All-India Congress secretaryship for the year. He did not want to shoulder executive responsibility. But he could not resist Mohammed Ali.

They got on well together. Nehru introduced the new system in his office of addressing everybody by his surname and dropped all honorifics. Munshis, Moulvis, Maulanas and Mahatmas vanished. Shris, Syeds, Shriyuts and Sheikhs faded away from the rolls of the Congress. Nehru wanted to set a good example. But he was not to have his way.

"Mohammed Ali," he says, "sent me a frantic telegram directing me as 'president' to revert to our practice and, in particular, always to address Gandhiji as Mahatma."

I. RIFT IN THE CONGRESS

Early in 1924 arose the quarrel between the swarajists and the Gandhi-ites. Jawaharlal was a Gandhi-ite, his father was a swarajist. Each of them had his own way and followed his own light. Motilal did not try to win his son and he failed to win his son's *guru*. In December, 1924, the Congress

session was held at Belgaum. And Gandhiji was its president.

"For him to become president," says Jawaharlal, "was something in the nature of anticlimax, for he had long been the permanent super-president."

Jawaharlal did not like Gandhiji's presidential address. It struck him as uninspiring. Nehru was again elected as the working secretary of the All-India Congress Committee. He was becoming the permanent super-secretary as Gandhiji has been the permanent super-president.

II. FIRST CITIZEN OF ALLAHABAD

The presidentship of Allahabad Municipality was thrust upon Jawaharlal much against his own wishes but he carried on the work efficiently and well. Within two years he was quite exhausted with the hard work that he put in for the welfare of the citizens. He was thoroughly fed up with the Civil Lines where all the Big Noises and the Little Noises lived and which consumed most of the money collected from poorer quarters. Jawaharlal did all he could for the denizens of the city.

III. VISIT TO EUROPE

In the autumn of 1925 Kamla, the wife of Jawaharlal, fell ill and grew worse day by day. So he took her to Switzerland in March, 1926. It was his visit to Europe after thirteen years. It was a quiet and restful period of

. .

Jawaharlal's life. He spent it mostly in Switzerland.

Jawaharlal met in Geneva Shyamaji Krishnavarma, the noted Indian revolutionary. His pockets bulged with the old copies of his paper, the *Indian Sociologist*. His talk was all of the past. The walls of his room were covered with dust-laden books. They looked down sorrowfully on the intruder.

"Over the whole place," says Jawaharlal, "there hung an atmosphere of gloom, an air of decay; life seemed an unwelcome guest there, and, as one walked through the dark and silent corridors, one almost expected to come across, round the corner, the shadow of death."

Jawaharlal also met Mahendra Pratap, the other revolutionary. He was a delightful optimist. He lived completely in the air. He refused to have anything to do with reality.

"I was taken aback when I first saw him," says Jawaharlal. "He appeared in strange composite attire. He had various pockets in which he kept confidential documents. He considered it safe to carry his papers on his person."

"He seemed," adds Jawaharlal, "to be a character out of medieval romance, a Don Quixote who had strayed into the twentieth century."

In February, 1927, Jawaharlal attended the Brussels Congress of Oppressed Nationalities as an official delegate of the Indian National Congress. Communist element was strong there:

Almost all countries were represented. There Jawaharlal delivered the message of India and explained the deplorable economic exploitation of the country by the British ever since the Battle of Plassey.

Jawaharlal returned to India towards the end of 1927 and directly attended the Madras Congress where he presented a bunch of resolutions to the Working Committee—resolutions on independence, war danger, association with the League against imperialism, etc.—and nearly all of them were accepted, adopted and unanimously passed.

Chapter Four

THE POLITICAL PROPHET

Jawaharlal Nehru has been a meteorologist of the political atmosphere. No statesman studied the international barometer more carefully than Jawaharlal Nehru has done. Rarely have his prophecies gone astray.

Jawaharlal condemned Hitler in Germany, Franco in Spain, Japan in China, and Italy in Abyssinia at a time when the American capitalists were financing Japanese imperialism and the British were flattering Hitler. Jawaharlal turned down the invitation of Hitler to see him during the former's visit to Berlin at the time when Chamberlain hurried from London with his umbrella to Munich to woo and win the German Dictator.

And who was responsible for the Second World War? Britain or Germany?

Jawaharlal saw with his prophetic vision that the war was coming twelve years before the war started. The following extracts from his speech delivered at the Indian National Congress at Madras in December, 1927, are a remarkable piece of diplomatic information. Jawaharlal describes vividly the secret preparations made by Great Britain in the twenties which fathered Hitler and mothered the monster of the Second World War.

I. WHAT IS EMPIRE ?

“What is the Empire but India ? It comes to this. For the sake of India, to hold India under subjection, Sir Austin Chamberlain and the British Government cannot agree to the principle of disarmament or peace. It is well recognised in Europe especially by small nations who are always raising this question in the League of Nations that England is the greatest obstacle in the attainment of disarmament or world peace. I should like to indicate you some of the war preparations which England is making. You know that preparations for war are secret preparations. Nations do not advertise when they are going to prepare for war. Nonetheless when preparations are being carried on on a most extensive scale—on the scale which England has been carrying on—it is impossible to hide them. So some of these things have come to light. The biggest and one of the latest things we have had for a number of years before us is the Singapore base. Why is England spending millions and millions of pounds and making the great naval base of Singapore ? Surely it can only be a challenge directed against China and Japan and also against France, or if there is a war, there is a danger of France declaring war against England. Then England can threaten French possessions in Indo-China from Singapore. It is also directed against the Dutch East Indies, because England can force Holland to be neutral in case of war. It is directed partly at any rate against America and American domi-

nations in the Pacific, because in case of a conflict England could sweep down the Philippine Islands and take possession of them. It is chiefly directed against India because it is for the retention of India that all these things are done. Imagine that there is a struggle in India, then the Singapore base will facilitate the transport of troops from Australia to India and in many other ways will help the British in taking the offensive in India. So much for the Singapore base.

“Then we have another naval base which is being made at Trincomalee. We have also the great Royal Indian Navy which has recently been created with a flourish of trumpets. Whatever it may be, it is not an Indian Navy except perhaps that the expenses for it will come out of the Indian exchequer. This Navy is merely an adjunct of the British Navy to help the British Government against India although it may be at our cost. Again, I should like to draw your attention to the rapid development of the transport system in India specially in the North-West Frontier Province, Western Punjab and the north-east frontier in India. War nowadays very largely depends on transport. That is why the transport system has been perfected. Strategic railways have been laid all over the North-Western Frontier. You have heard of the Khyber Pass Railway. You will also hear subsequently of other strategic railways which are being built at great cost for military reasons. When military reasons are considered, cost is no consider-

ation. Military roads have been built from the Khyber Pass, from the Punjab, from the North-Western Frontier, right up to Karachi. Motor-lorry service has been started from Karachi to Peshawar. All this will facilitate the transport of troops and other materials in time of war. Although railways are there, railways might perhaps not be suitable—they may perhaps have strikes to contend against; therefore the whole military machinery of England is being made self-sufficient.”

II. READINESS FOR WAR

“Now let me come to the north-eastern frontier in Assam. Recently you might have noticed in the papers that proposals are being considered that a part of Assam to the north-east of India may be converted into a new military province like the North-Western Frontier to facilitate the carrying on of war there, if necessary. For this purpose roads are laid, railways are projected between India and Burma and even between Burma and Assam. You may remember that the *Forward* of Calcutta was some time ago banned from entering Burma. The reason why it was banned was that it published and criticised something about these military roads in Assam, and the proposal to create a new military province. Let me go back to the North-Western Province where there is an extraordinary concentration of air forces and tanks. Those who know have told us, it is the finest and best equipment that any army possesses. Karachi has been created an

air base and other bases in the North-Western Province are being prepared so that the province is today full of activity for preparations for war. Two proposals have been made in England and also in Anglo-Indian journals in India which, although officials denied in Parliament, persist in getting publicity in the press. These periodicals are supposed to know what Government are doing and these proposals are of the greatest interest to us. The first was that a part of the British Expeditionary Force should be stationed in India because there is more danger of war in Asia than in Europe. Therefore, it is desirable that that force should be ready in India and should immediately start war-like preparations when necessary. The second proposal was that these highly developed mechanised forces should be used when there is any danger of war. The procedure that England should adopt was coldly stated in the English press to be not to wait for an attack but to make a forward spring into Central Asia across Afghanistan in one sweep. This was proposed because just in the same way Germans are supposed in their attack on France to have made a forward spring across Belgium."

III. WAR PREPARATIONS

"I should like to tell you one or two things also in connection with the war preparations of Britain, which a friend of mine has drawn attention to. He himself is a famous doctor and tells me that a large number of persons

have received a circular letter from the Medical Military Department in India. This letter has been issued to every member of the Civil Medical Department and he has been asked if he is prepared in case of emergency to serve as Medical Military Officer. Another letter has been issued to all doctors who have served in the last war asking them if they are prepared to join the Medical Reserve. Friends, I should like you to consider what all this means. When the resolution was moved in the subjects committee, some people thought that it was rather an unnecessary resolution. They have not heard of any military preparations and they do not know anything of the coming war. They think that our domestic problems are more important. They ask why we should waste time and energy over what might be happening in the North-West Frontier Province. I beg of you to consider whether these few facts are not sufficient to make you realise the great danger of war that exists in the world and round about us in particular. If such a danger exists, are you prepared to take no notice of it, but discuss only petty problems ? ”

IV. TWO MORE THINGS

“ Two more things I want to tell you in connection with these preparations. The recent treaty between England and Mesopotamia. The Anglo-Iraq treaty is one. And the second is the Amir's visit to India. I would not be surprised if the cordial welcome, the British Government extended to him, has not some-

thing to do with the desire of the British Government to win him over. We are not in a position to stop the war, it may be. But at any rate we are in a position to make it clear what attitude India will take up and it is quite possible and conceivable that if India's attitude is clearly stated then England too may change hers. England might not dare to provoke war when she knows that India would not support the war but actually hinder the conduct of the war. Now this resolution lays down clearly that India has no quarrel with her neighbours. As to the declaration itself, it is our right to determine whether we shall join the war or not. Thirdly, another declaration follows and that is the most important. In case war comes and an attempt is made to exploit you, you will refuse to be exploited and to take any part in the war. I trust that if war comes and I think war may be nearer than most of us imagine—it may come in a year, two years or five years—the National Congress will follow up the lead given today. I also trust that the Indian people will rally round the Congress forgetting their petty differences and generally adopt the attitude which the Congress has suggested and refuse to participate in the war and suffer any consequence that might follow. I am convinced that if the Congress and the Indian people adopt this attitude they will emerge from that great ordeal much better, much freer and India will be a united and independent nation."

Chapter Five

PRESIDENT NEHRU

No other Congress leader, with the sole exception of Mahatma Gandhi, has enjoyed such thumping popularity in the Indian National Congress as Jawaharlal and he always enjoyed the whole-hearted and full-throated sympathy and support of Mahatma Gandhi. Jawaharlal has been an idol of the Indian masses and four times a president of the Indian National Congress—an absolutely unique honour.

Jawaharlal has had experience of lathi-charge during the boycott of the Simon Commission when even the jackals in New Delhi shouted "Go Back Simon!" In December, 1928, at the Calcutta Congress was passed the resolution for dominion status within one year. It was also ultimatum for complete independence if dominion status would not be granted within a year.

I. FIRST TERM

If Motilal presided over the dominion status Congress in 1928, his son got the honour of presiding next year at Lahore over the complete independence Congress. It was a unique honour in which the ex-president and the president-elect were father and son. The chronicles of the world do not have a parallel example.

Surely the Nehrus have the greatest honour of piloting the ship of Indian independence.

"The Lahore session," says Jawaharlal, "remains fresh in my memory—a vivid patch. That is natural, for I played a leading role there, and for a moment, occupied the centre of the stage; and I like to think some time of the emotions that filled me during those crowded days. I can never forget the magnificent welcome that the people of Lahore gave me, tremendous in its volume and intensity. I knew well that this overflowing enthusiasm was for a symbol and an idea, not for me personally; yet it was no little thing for a person to become that symbol even for a while in the eyes and hearts of great numbers of people and I felt exhilarated and lifted out of myself."

A big satyagraha movement followed the Lahore session and thousands of brave souls went behind the bars. Jawaharlal also found himself in the Naini prison.

"My bed," says Jawaharlal, "was heavily chained up lest I might take it up and walk away, or more probably, to avoid the bed being used as a kind of scaling ladder to climb the wall of the enclosure."

The non-co-operation movement terminated in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, and Gandhiji's departure for London to attend the Second Round Table Conference.

II. SECOND TERM

Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 was held under the chairmanship of Sardar Patel.

The resolution on the fundamental rights was drafted by Jawaharlal and passed unanimously at the session. The peace of the Congress was marred by the execution of Bhagat Singh. It was regretted that Gandhiji did not make his release an important item in the Delhi Pact. As a symbol of disapproval a black flower was presented to Gandhiji by some "reds" at Karachi.

The illness of Jawaharlal's wife necessitated his return to Switzerland and there she died at Lausanne on February 28, 1936. A little before news had reached him that he had been elected president of the Indian National Congress for the second time. So he returned to India. On the way at Rome he had a curious experience. Mussolini was straining every nerve to meet Jawaharlal and Jawaharlal trying very hard to escape that calamity in order to save himself from being a victim of fascist propaganda.

"I remembered," says Jawaharlal, "how Gandhiji when he passed through Rome in 1931 had a bogus interview in the *Giornale d' Italia* fastened on to him."

In the struggle of the nerves between Mussolini and Jawaharlal it was the latter who won.

"Soon after my arrival in Rome, a high official called on me and gave me an invitation to meet Signor Mussolini that evening. It had all been fixed up, he told me. I was surprised and pointed out that I had already asked to be excused. We argued for an hour, till the time fixed for the interview itself, and then I

had my way. There was no interview."

The Congress session was held at Lucknow and it was a great success. Jawaharlal delivered a remarkable address covering the entire international situation. Jawaharlal carried a whirlwind electioneering campaign and the Congress swept the polls in seven provinces.

III. THIRD TERM

Jawaharlal was re-elected president in 1937 and he exercised much wholesome influence in the formation of ministries. His sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, became a minister in the United Provinces.

In the summer of 1937 Jawaharlal visited Burma and Malaya. It was no holiday. Engagements pursued him everywhere. Nevertheless the change was pleasant. Nehru was pleased to meet the flowery and youthful people of Burma. Unlike the people of India they had no stamp of long ages upon them.

(Subhas Bose was elected president for the Congress session in 1938 when the meeting was held at Haripura.) Soon afterwards Jawaharlal decided to go to Europe. He wanted to see his daughter and also to freshen up his tired and exhausted mind. But Europe was not a place of tranquillity.

"There was gloom there and the apparent stillness before a storm," says Jawaharlal. "It was the Europe of 1938 when Mr. Chamberlain's appeasement was in full swing and marching over the bodies of nations, betrayed and crushed, to the final scene that was staged

at Munich."

Trouble arose over the re-election of Subhas Bose and the rift took place between Gandhiji and Bose. The war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1939 and things became very tense in India. Bose started the Forward Bloc but then suddenly disappeared to Germany and Japan. He started the Indian National Army and launched a war against Britain and America. It was an epic struggle and many books have appeared on the subject since the termination of war.

Abul Kalam has been the president all these years from 1938 to 1946. Quit-India movement was launched in August, 1942, and all the leaders were arrested. The members of the Working Committee were imprisoned in Ahmednagar Fort. There went Jawaharlal. They all were released in 1945 to discuss the Wavell Plan.

IV. FOURTH TERM

During the visit of the British Cabinet Mission Abul Kalam was requested to continue to be president for another year but the work had been too much for him all these years and he firmly declined the offer. So Jawaharlal was elected president for the fourth term.

Jawaharlal was installed president for the year 1946 at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Bombay on July 8 to consider the Cabinet Mission proposals.

Chapter Six

NEHRU DISCOVERS INDIA

When the people discovered quit-India, Jawaharlal discovered true India.

The quit-India movement of August, 1942, deepened Jawaharlal's faith in the people's determination to wrest freedom from the unwilling hands. It was as if Jawaharlal came abruptly at the fountain of Vital Energy which he had long been searching for. Consequently when Jawaharlal was confined in the Ahmednagar Fort along with other members of the Congress Working Committee, he started digging into the horse-hoof pit until he came to the solid rock of Indian nationalism stuck deep in its past. That is how Jawaharlal discovered India and called his book *The Discovery of India*.

The book was written during his ninth and the longest term of incarceration. It has the subjectivity of the *Autobiography* and the objectivity of the *Glimpses of World History*. Nehru digs deep into the cultural heritage.

I. INDIAN UNITY

"It would seem every outside element that came to India and has been absorbed by India has given something to India and taken much from her," he said. "It contributed much to its own and to India's strength. But where it

kept apart or has been unable to become a sharer and participant in India's life and her rich diverse culture it had no lasting influence and ultimately faded away sometimes injuring itself and India in the process."

II. NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

There was a strong conflict between his nationalism and internationalism. He attempted to co-ordinate these two different traits of his ideology and held that internationalism presupposed a strong nationalism. "Nationalism," he said, "is stronger today than it has ever been. Many people think that nationalism has had its day and must inevitably give place to the ever-growing international tendencies of the modern world. Socialism with its proletarian background derides national culture as something tied up with a decaying middle-class. Capitalism itself has become progressively international with its cartels and combines. Trade and commerce, easy communications and rapid transport, the radio and cinema all have helped to create an international atmosphere and to produce the delusion that nationalism is doomed." "Yet," affirmed the Pandit, "whenever a crisis has arisen nationalism has emerged again and dominated the scene, and people have sought comfort and strength in their old traditions." To support his view-point he carefully examined internationalism as it had flowered in Russia and said that "the appeal of the Fatherland is now much greater than the appeal of the inter-

national proletariat."

III. DIVISION OF INDIA

"Some Hindus," he said, "talk of going back to the *Vedas*, some Moslems dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies! There is no going back to the past, there is no turning back even if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time." He held that any division of India on a religious basis as between Hindus and Moslems, as envisaged by the Moslem League, could not solve the minorities' problem and could at best be only a temporary arrangement. "Some division of India," he added, "may be enforced, with some tenuous bond joining the divided parts. Even if this happens, I am convinced that the basic feeling of unity and world developments will later bring the divided parts nearer to each other and result in a real unity." He is at one with H. G. Wells in thinking that humanity is at the end of an age—an age of fragmentation in the management of its affairs, fragmentation politically among separate sovereign states and economically among unrestricted business organisations competing for profit. He was, however, not blind to the fact that a large section of Moslems in India were emotionally worked up in a state of frenzy regarding the demand for Pakistan and he said: "Group notions and conscious and sub-conscious urges count and must be attended to. It is at least equally clear that facts and realities do not vanish by our ignoring them or covering them up by a

film of emotion. They have a way of emerging at awkward moments and in unexpected ways." He held that whatever might be the future of India, and even if there was a regular partition, the different parts of India would have to co-operate with each other in a hundred ways. "Even independent nations have to co-operate with each other, much more so must Indian provinces or such parts as emerge from a partition, for these stand in an intimate relationship to each other and must hang together or deteriorate, disintegrate and lose their freedom. There is no getting away from it, whether we are in favour of Pakistan or not, unless, we are blind to everything except a momentary passion . . . The alternative is stagnation, decay and disintegration, tending to loss of political and economic freedom, both for India as a whole and its various separated parts."

IV. LESSONS OF POVERTY

A divided India, each part trying to help itself and not caring for or co-operating with the rest, would, the Pandit held, lead to an aggravation of the poverty of the people and a "sinking into a welter of hopeless, helpless misery". He said: "It is terribly late already and we have to make up for lost time. Must even the lesson of the Bengal famine be lost upon us? There are still many people who can think only in terms of political percentages, of weightage, of balancing, of checks, of the preservation of privileged groups, of making new groups privileged, of preventing others from advancing

because they themselves are not anxious to or are incapable of doing so, of vested interests, of avoiding major social and economic changes, of holding on to the present picture of India with only superficial alterations. That way lies supreme folly."

After pointing out the fallacies and dangers inherent in the two-nation theory on which the structure of Pakistan was raised, Nehru proclaimed that "unity is geographical, historical and cultural and all that." "The most powerful factor in favour of a united India," he held, "is the trend of world events." "Mr. Jinnah's thought," he asserted, "identifies a nation with religion. That is not the usual approach today. But whether India is properly to be described as one nation or two or more really does not matter, for the modern idea of nationality has been almost divorced from statehood."

V. JINNAH AND JINNAHISM

While tracing the history of the minorities' problem in India, Nehru passed some stringent remarks against the "upper-class feudal leadership" of the Moslem League. He admired Jinnah for his political acumen and intelligence, but said that "with all his strength and tenacity, he is a strangely negative person whose appropriate symbol might well be a 'No'."

"Mr. Jinnah," he continued, "shines as a lawyer-politician, as one who thinks that he holds the balance between nationalist India and

the British Power. If conditions were different and he had to face real problems, political and economic, it is difficult to say how far his ability would carry him. Perhaps he is himself doubtful of this, although he has no small opinion about himself. This may be an explanation for that sub-conscious urge in him against change and to keep things going as they are, of an avoidance of discussion and calm consideration of problems with people who do not wholly agree with him. He fits into the present pattern. Whether he or anybody else will fit into a new pattern it is difficult to say. What passion moves him, what objective does he strive for? Is it that he has no dominating passion except the pleasure he has in playing a fascinating political game of chess in which he often has an opportunity to say 'Check'? He seems to have a hatred for the Congress which has grown with the years.

"Of economics, which overshadow the world today, he appeared to be entirely ignorant. The extraordinary occurrences that had taken place all over the world since World War Number One had apparently had no effect on him. He had left the Congress when that organisation had taken a political leap forward. The gap had widened as the Congress developed an economic and mass outlook. But Mr. Jinnah seemed to have remained ideologically in that identical place where he stood a generation ago, or rather he had gone farther back, for now he condemned both India's unity and democracy."

VI. CRIPPS DRAMA

Being one of the principal actors in the "Cripps Drama" staged at Delhi in 1942 and the First Simla Conference in 1945, Jawaharlal had many hitherto-unpublished stories to reveal regarding these "episodes" in Indian political history. He talked with first-hand knowledge of the various phases of the negotiations that ultimately ended in smoke, and that lent a peculiar charm to his narrative. "The open revolution," he said, "was a direct outcome of a sense of frustration that weighed heavily on people's minds. What happened in India in August, 1942, was no sudden development but a culmination of all that had gone before. Behind it all lay an intense feeling that it was no longer possible to endure and live under foreign autocratic rule." By quoting chapter and verse from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, who drafted the fateful quit-India resolution, and by stating facts that were revealed to him by "persons in close touch with the whole revolt", he placed the responsibility, as is to be expected, for the "unfortunate episode" on an "autocratic and thoroughly ruthless government". "If the Government had had the capacity or desire to understand and appreciate what moved the people so powerfully the crisis would not have arisen at all and India's problem would have been nearer solution."

VII. THE GOLDEN DISCOVERY

Starting with the probing of that great dust-heap called history and wending his way

through an examination and analysis of events not yet relegated to the past, the Pandit ended his rambling roving "journey" on a not unfamiliar note of hope and optimism. "India will find herself again when freedom opens out new horizon and the future will then fascinate her far more than the immediate past of frustration and humiliation. She will go forward with confidence, rooted in herself, and yet eager to learn from others and co-operate with them. Today she swings between a blind adherence to her old customs and a slavish imitation of foreign ways. In neither of these can she find relief or life or growth . . . True culture derives its inspiration from every corner of the world. The day of a narrow culture confined to a small fastidious group is past. We have to think in terms of the people generally and their culture must be a continuation and development of past trends, and must also represent their new urges and creative tendencies."

His historical survey, from the Indus Valley civilisation to the 1857 mutiny—which uprising he insisted on labelling as "the Great Revolt"—is scholarly. He analysed personalities, discussed thought movements, traced social practices to their origin, enquired into causes and effects, separated essentials from inessentials, arranged events and episodes in the order of their historical importance and in the end sang praises of "a special heritage for those of us of India, something that is in our flesh and blood and bones, that has gone to make what we are and what we are likely to be."

Chapter Seven

SAVIOUR OF I.N.A.

Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose have been a magnetic pair in Indian politics. During the twenties they were on the same plank and formed the youthful leftist element in the Indian National Congress.

During the thirties, Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose drifted far apart. Jawaharlal came more and more under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, while for Subhas Bose the fountain-head of inspiration has been C. R. Das. One became the rightist, the other leftist.

There was a temporary truce in 1938 followed by an unbridgeable gulf. Subhas Bose was elected president unanimously but his second term of office was opposed by the rightists. Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose were never the same again.

Subhas Bose ran the gauntlet of British internment and reached Berlin and Tokio. He joined hands with Hitler and General Tojo and formed the Indian National Army in Europe as well as in South-East Asia. Bose fought while Jawaharlal was in prison.

As soon as Jawaharlal came out, his first concern was about the I.N.A. heroes who were rotting in British gaols, but no nationalist dared speak a word in protest. Before anybody had yet opened his lips, Jawaharlal

spoke out coolly and candidly that India regarded the Indian National Army not as rebels but as heroes. And with his magic wand Jawaharlal awakened the whole country. "Had I been in the place of Subhas Bose," he declared, "I would have done exactly as he has done."

That is a great self-psychological study of Jawaharlal and something definitely to be remembered.

I. VEIL LIFTED

Commenting on the Government of India's *communiqué* on the treatment to be accorded to the Indian National Army, Jawaharlal Nehru said in an interview * : "I am glad that the Government of India have issued a *communiqué* in regard to the prisoners of the Indian National Army formed in Malaya in 1942. The veil at last has been lifted, but facts are still hidden. I would suggest that those facts, or many of them, should be released to the public. What is the total number of officers and prisoners of this Army in the various forts, camps and prisons of India ?

"What action has already been taken in regard to any of them ? What were the original circumstances which led to the formation of this Army in Malaya, for instance ?

"It has been stated, with what authority I do not know, that they were left there to shift for themselves. Many points of constitutional law arise and these should be considered care-

* New Delhi, August 28, 1945.

fully by competent experts of those laws. It may be maintained that any such army, formed in the circumstances then existing and recognised by a foreign power as an independent army, gains status of a combatant force and its prisoners should be treated as ordinary prisoners of war. I am not expert enough in constitutional law to give opinion, but I am sure this matter is worthy of earnest consideration.

“The main point, however, is not one of law. It depends on the approach to the question. Is it a completely English and non-Indian approach, or is it an Indian approach? I can understand and appreciate the English approach, but I can also understand and not only appreciate but deeply feel the Indian approach, which, I think, must be common not only in the civilian population of India but also in the British Indian Army.

“The war is over happily for all of us and problems must be viewed in terms of peace and not of war. Political consequences of any act of severe punishment must be taken into consideration and there is no doubt that such political consequences might be deep and far-reaching. In this connection, a possible comparison common, though not wholly apposite, is that of the Maquis in France. When the German army wanted to deal with the Maquis as rebels of the Petain Government, General Eisenhower very rightly issued a stern warning to them and told them that the Maquis must be treated as combatant forces and allowed the privileges of prisoners of war.

“There can be no doubt that this Indian National Army functioned as regular, organised, disciplined and uniformed combatant force. There can be no mistake in this. It was unfortunate that many of them were misguided enough to support a wrong cause, but it should never be forgotten that they had no desire or intention of supporting that cause as such but were moved by their passion for India's freedom. I have no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of the Indian men and officers of the British Indian Army will appreciate generous treatment to their old comrades in arms.”

II. IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR INDIA

A demand that the Government of India should clarify the matter regarding the Indian National Army, who fought against the British along with the Japanese, was made by Jawaharlal Nehru while addressing workers of the National Conference at Srinagar on August 19, 1945.

Nehru said that about twenty-five thousand Indian soldiers, mostly Sikhs and Moslems, contacted the Japanese after the fall of Singapore, etc., and formed the Indian National Army to fight against the British. He affirmed that they were misguided, but whatever they did was done by them out of patriotic motive. Most of them had, however, been arrested and were reported to be in Indian gaols. What treatment the Government of India would mete out to them was a matter of great concern for Indians. “No doubt, these

people committed a mistake, but, if they are treated harshly, it would create an important issue for India."

III. SUPREME TRAGEDY IF THESE MEN ARE LIQUIDATED

Jawaharlal Nehru, in an interview to the *Associated Press* at Srinagar on August 19, 1945, clarifying his remarks about the future of Subhas Bose's Indian National Army, said :

"There is one matter which has been painful and troubling me for some time, but to which I have made no reference so far because any mention of it might have been misunderstood. But now that the war has ended, there is no such reason for remaining silent on that issue. This concerns the twenty thousand or more prisoners of the so-called Indian National Army, which had been formed in Malaya and Burma. I was of the opinion three years ago and am still of the opinion that the leaders and others of this Army had been misguided in many ways and had failed to appreciate the larger consequences of their unfortunate association with the Japanese.

"Three years ago I was asked in Calcutta what I would do if Subhas Bose led an army into India on the plea of liberating India. I replied then that I would not hesitate to resist this invasion even though I did not doubt that Subhas Bose and his Indian colleagues and followers were motivated by the desire to free India and were in no way mere tools of the Japanese. Nevertheless, they had put them-

selves on the wrong side and were functioning under the Japanese auspices. No person could come to India in this way or under such foreign auspices.

"Therefore, whatever the motive behind the people they had to be resisted in India or outside.

"But the situation has completely changed with the end of war. And now a very large number of officers and soldiers of this Indian National Army, as it is called, are prisoners and some of them at least have been executed.

"Though proper information is lacking, it is reliably stated that very bad treatment is being given to them in prisons and forts, where they are kept and many of them live the shadow of death. I do not wish to complain to the British for the strict military rule. They could plead justification for treating with rebels in any way they like. But as an Indian and as one representing in this respect the view of almost all Indians of whatever party or group, I would say that it would be supreme tragedy if these officers and men are liquidated by way of punishment.

"Whatever their failings and mistakes may have been in the past, and these were serious there can be no doubt that they are a fine body of young men, taken as a whole, fine officers and fine rank and file and that their dominating motive was love for India's freedom. At any time it would have been wrong to treat them too harshly, but at this time, when it is said that big changes are impending in India,

it would be a very grave mistake, leading to far-reaching consequences, if they were treated just as ordinary rebels, the punishment given to them would in effect be a punishment on all India and all Indians and a deep wound would be created in millions of hearts. In this matter, fortunately, there is no communal question, for these officers and men are Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs.

“From such accounts as had come to me, it appears probable that this Indian National Army first took shape when Singapore was almost surrounded by the Japanese and most of the British Army left by boat. The Indian Army in Malaya was, therefore, left stranded by the fortunes of war and was completely at the mercy of the Japanese.

“At that time a junior officer of the British Indian Army, Sardar Mohan Singh, apparently got into touch with the Japanese Command and organised the remnants of the Indian troops there, which amounted to nearly seven thousands. Although Mohan Singh, to some extent, co-operated with the Japanese, they resisted their encroachments in many ways and refused to be a tool in their hands. After many months, matters came to a crisis and Mohan Singh, who had proved a very efficient and brave organiser, was arrested by the Japanese and disappeared completely. Probably, he was executed by the Japanese.

“This in itself shows the curious and anomalous position of this Indian National Army and how its leaders were continually trying to

prevent the exploitation of their men for Japanese imperialist purposes. How far they succeeded in this I do not know. But the motive underlying the action comes out clearly and it is important.

“In view of all this, I earnestly trust that nothing will be done in regard to these prisoners of war which will lead to an additional festering sore in India’s mind and heart. With the end of war, the immediate exigency past, large considerations should prevail ”

IV. IS SUBHAS BOSE WAR CRIMINAL ?

An American journalist asked for clarification of Nehru’s attitude to Subhas Chandra Bose who, he said, was not probably dead but alive in Saigon. He said that Bose should be treated as a war criminal because his men fought and killed many Americans and he extorted money from the poor in Burma and Malaya. An Indian correspondent intervened and said that no case of the Indian National Army having fought the American forces had ever come to sight. His investigations showed that “Bose’s government levied some kind of tax on Indians only ”.

Nehru reiterated his views on Subhas Chandra Bose. He resented the suggestion that Subhas Bose should be dealt with as a war criminal. He said : “Personally I should be very happy if all persons considered as war criminals are brought to trial and facts come out. But they should be tried by American and Indian judges as well. And in my list

there will be many high officials sitting in Delhi who will be war criminals. The judges should be impartial." He added that he knew Subhas for over twenty years, he was the president of the Congress. A most unusual thing happened and an ex-president of the Congress was turned out of the organisation. That was before the war. He also formed a party to attack the Congress. Then came the war and from India he went to Germany and then to Japan. So far as Nehru knew the Indian National Army had already been formed even before Bose came to Japan. He did not find anything unusual for a supposed legal government to levy taxes. As for extortion, Nehru alleged, there was enough in India. Free gifts were collected for war funds and millions had been extorted. Three millions died of starvation in Bengal. As for Bose he had never doubted his passion for freedom.

Chapter Eight

WHAT IS NEHRUISM ?

Gandhism and Nehruism are like a bullet and a gun. One is not of much value without the other. Gandhiji needed the practicality of Jawaharlal as Jawaharlal needed the ideality of Gandhiji.

As the battle for freedom progressed, one became indispensable to the other.

Nehruism is Gandhiji's philosophy of non-violence, treated as a political strategy rather than as a moral principle surcharged with democratic ideals of the West.

"India accordingly lies at the parting of the ways," said Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. "On the one hand it is under the patriarchal guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand it is already indulging in industrialism which stands at the opposite pole. In other words, the question is whether the journey should be on the limpid waters of a still lake or on the tossing waves of a flowing river in high floods. Gandhi has often reported that Jawaharlal is his heir. What can the latter inherit as such ? The former has only his loin-cloth, his dangling watch and his long stick. It is, therefore, well and good that the so-called heir has repudiated his heirship. What the heir of Gandhi should inherit is not his material asset but his 'real property'."

There is little doubt that Jawaharlal has inherited this "real property", but like a good successor he has augmented his possessions through ideas of his own. His utterances have a character of their own. Here are a few examples of Nehruism :

I. ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

"The August movement was the symbol of India's growing strength and I am glad that the masses of India accepted the Government's challenge to crush the Congress—the embodiment of India's will to freedom—and rose equal to the occasion," Jawaharlal Nehru thundered addressing a public meeting at Azamgarh town in 1946.

He made scathing criticism of the personnel of the Indian Civil Service and said these permanent servicemen though spending practically the whole of their life would not learn or unlearn anything and referred how the bungling bureaucracy, the Bengal Government, and the Government of India were responsible for the death of thirty to forty millions of people in Bengal due to starvation.

Nehru also said that the problem of demobilised soldiers could not be solved by such an inefficient government.

He added, "Swaraj is the right of all and not of a few. In a Swaraj Government poverty will be a thing of the past."

II. FLAME OF FREEDOM

In the course of a statement issued from

Allahabad on March 4, 1947, Nehru said, "Friends and colleagues in Jubbulpore have pressed me to visit the city in view of the situation that has arisen there, owing to the strike of the signalmen and others, belonging to the Indian Army. Such facts as are known, have been supplied to me. I gather that the men on strike have remained completely peaceful ; further that on February 28 a considerable number of them were injured, some seriously, by some kind of a bayonet charge made upon them in their barracks. The strikers' demands were for better treatment, in regard to rations, amenities, etc., and no inequality of treatment between Indian and British soldiers. There were also some political demands.

"Such demands should not normally be made the basis of a strike. They involve large issues and indeed, in the last analysis, the issue of India's freedom. What steps should be taken, and when, in regard to this fundamental issue in India, it should be for the nation to decide, through its leaders and representatives. It is undesirable for any group to force the issue.

"In regard to the demands for better treatment and no differentiation every Indian must invariably sympathise with them. The soldiers in other armies have been through many years of gruelling war-time experience. In all armies, there is a feeling of weariness and a desire to go home. We have seen recently strikes in the personnel of the American and British armies.

."In armies there is the ever-present feeling

of resentment at the differential treatment accorded to Indians, officers and other ranks alike. What was meekly submitted to previously, can no longer be borne, for the Indian people today are proud and virile, and determined to be free. The flame of freedom runs through us all, whether we are civilians or army men. It is in this context, that every situation has to be judged. We all want discipline in the army, for an army without discipline is no army. But discipline today must be considered in this new context, and not as a slave discipline of former times. The problem thus becomes one of India's freedom and a re-fashioning of our civil and military structure, in the light of that freedom. Merely to suppress and punish in the old way is futile, for it makes the problem more acute.

"I trust that the military authorities in India will have this picture of India today in their minds and function accordingly. To Indian soldiers I would say that their cause is ours. It is the nation's. Our ultimate object is the freedom and independence of India. We are happy that the old barriers between army men and civilians in India are breaking down.

"This new situation brings new responsibilities on all of us, and we must not function light-heartedly, or else we waste the opportunity that awaits us."

III. PLANNED COLLECTIVISM

Writing in the June (1946) issue of *Asia*, Nehru said: "Not only must equal oppor-

tunities be given to all, but special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth must be given to backward groups so as to enable them to catch up to those who are ahead of them."

Let this be done, emphasised the Indian leader, for "any such attempt to open the door of opportunity to all in India will release enormous energy and ability and transform the country with amazing speed."

Nehru said, in the same vein India also necessarily must demand an economic system which fits in with such equality and encourages it. He declared today's problems in India, "complicated as they seem, are essentially due to an attempt to advance while preserving the political and economic structure more or less intact."

Economic change is necessary, he said, and "that change will have to be in the direction of democratically planned collectivism." Nehru emphasised this does not mean private property would be abolished, but it would mean "public ownership of the basic and major industries" and "co-operative and collective control of the land."

Nehru said that in India "it will be necessary to have, in addition to the big industries, co-operatively controlled small and village industries," and, he declared, "such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people."

While asking for a principle of expanding

the "productive capacity of the nation in every possible way" and "absorbing all the labour power of the nation in some activity or other," Nehru asked that "as far as possible there should be freedom to choose one's occupation."

He said this would not result in an equalisation of income among the people, but "there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards equalisation."

The result would cause the caste differences that exist today to disappear and would cause class distinctions "which are essentially based on differences in income" to begin to fade out.

IV. THE SOUL OF NEHRU

Nehru is a creature of another world. With a heart as soft as that of a new-born babe, he has sinews with strings of steel. He is the fine flower of a soul in agony. His eye is a-glitter with the intoxication of true patriotism. A halo of divinity hedges about him. He is very human, but he has seen through humanity. He is not merely a firmly-drawn figure of flesh and blood. He is a spirit of penetrating intellect—and cynicism—and misery. He wrings the mother's heart out of the masses and hurls them on the brink of martyrdom. He is a superman among men. And he is a superman, because he has held converse with God. His consciousness works in terms of Truth and the Negation of Cynicism. He has seen the truth, not alone of India, but of humanity, of the universe.

It is Nehru who is right. What he says and

thinks of imperialism is true. There is no fault in his logic. It is unwise to offer him a battle. For in the warfare of truth, justice and patriotism he has all the guns ready against the reactionaries at home as well as the imperialists abroad. He makes us realise the misery of living death in the midst of life. He acts with a fine steadiness of purpose. Although time is out of joint, he bridges the gulf by rational action.

There is a perfect rhythm in Nehru. We see the swell and surge of passion pressing onward through him. He has the mighty crash and backwash of a tragic figure. He has to fight hard against the poison of negation and nothingness. The demon of imperialism generates in him a withering and brutal sarcasm. His mind reflects swift changes. The whole universe is blackened for him by thoughtless repression. Light goes out. It leaves utter vacancy.

Nehru, like Hamlet, is a dualised personality. He wavers between grace and the hell of cynicism. His life reflects the see-saw motion. Analysis holds the fascination of giddiness. Like Buddha, Nehru is scorched by the shattering experience of universal misery. He is tired of the world of domination in all its glitter and superficial delight. Nehru is lovable and gentle. Nehru is beautiful and noble. There are no trivial things of life to blur his mortal vision. His mind is attuned to the exquisite music of the divine soul. His body is a cup of melody that can hold no bitterness. Every-

where in his life beauty dethrones ugliness.

Alone in the gay glitter of London, you find Nehru absorbed in thought. Silhouetted against brilliance, you find him drooping. The weight of seething poverty sits heavy on his shoulders. He has "that within which passeth show". Sometimes he feels that his "too too solid flesh" would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew. World is an unweeded garden, and Nehru finds it strewn with things rank and gross in nature.

To any man who can see the light is extinguished from the things of the earth. And Nehru is a man who does see the misery of the "have-not" people. This knowledge intensifies his pain. The sufferings of Buddha were nothing as compared with the sufferings of Nehru. Buddha had seen animals eaten by animals. But in the twentieth century men are being eaten by machines. No wonder, capitalism harrows the soul of Nehru. It freezes his young blood.

Nehru cries against fate that has laid on him the heavy responsibility of righting India's wrongs. Nehru's soul is sometimes sick to death.

The outstanding quality of Nehru is his endless capacity for action. He works himself into a towering passion in the frenzy of an all-out patriotism. Nothing can snap his will. Upon the wings of emotion he traverses all the interstellar spaces between Hell and Heaven. Hell and Heaven are but spatial embodiments of the lowest and the highest.

emotions.

Nehru lives by an intuitive faith. And he drawst his intuitive faith from a timeless reality within the soul. In spite of eternal torments for the downtrodden, which he has to shoulder day after day, there are no torments of eternity for him. In spite of his exalted position, he does never for a moment forget the true reality of a physical self. Man is but a quintessence of dust, waiting for the worms of death.

Chapter Nine

FURROWS OF FREEDOM

Very few people perhaps remember today that in the struggle for independence Jawaharlal has always pinned his faith on the Constituent Assembly rather than the authority transferred to the Central Cabinet. Constituent Assembly has been a pet subject of Jawaharlal since 1921. In fact he hammered upon the subject so often that the British were forced to sanction it in 1946.

“Treat us as equals and we will treat you as equals !” That was a fair and square request that Jawaharlal Nehru made to the British Government regarding the formation of the Constituent Assembly which he was convinced must be a completely sovereign body. And if the British would not willingly invest it with sovereignty, the Indians were nevertheless determined to snatch sovereignty forcibly.

This paramount declaration was made by Jawaharlal Nehru in a press conference at the Congress House, Bombay, on July 10, 1946, during the special session of the All-India Congress Committee. Here for the fourth term, Nehru took over the chairmanship of the Indian National Congress, thus breaking his own record.

Jawaharlal stated that the Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly completely

unfettered by agreements. The nationalists must be free to meet all situations as they arise. Britain must treat India as an equal in all things pertaining to the independence of India. The patriots must not permit Britain to dictate a treaty.

I. CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

As regards the Constituent Assembly Nehru reiterated his earlier statement that the Congress had made no commitment whatever either in regard to the long-term or the short-term plan of the Cabinet Mission except agreeing to go into the Constituent Assembly. But, obviously, once the Congress went into the Constituent Assembly, its main objective would be to see how to make it a success and in so doing, the Congress would certainly have to take into consideration the situation created by the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16. But, he added, the Constituent Assembly would never accept any dictation or any directive from the British Government in regard to its work. The only two factors which limited the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly were those relating to the minorities and the Indo-British treaty.

The minorities' question was an Indian problem and the British had no say in the matter. As regards the Indo-British treaty, the Congress would not accept anything imposed by the British Government. If the Government sought to perpetuate any vested interests, the Congress would resist it.

II. SOVEREIGN BODY

When the Congress had stated that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body, Nehru said : " The Cabinet Mission's reply was, it was more or less yes, subject to two considerations. Firstly, proper arrangement for minorities and the other a treaty between India and England. I wish the Cabinet Mission had stated both these matters are not controversial. It is obvious the minorities' question has to be settled satisfactorily. It is also obvious that if there is any kind of peaceful changeover in India it is bound to result in some kind of treaty with Britain.

" What exactly that treaty will be I cannot say. But if the British Government presumes to tell us that they are going to hold anything in India because they do not agree either in regard to minorities or in regard to treaty we shall not accept that position. We shall have no treaty if they seek to impose anything upon us and we shall tear up any treaty if they try to impose. If they treat us as equals and come to terms there will be a treaty. But if there is the slightest attempt at imposition, we shall have no treaty.

" In regard to minorities it is our problem and we shall no doubt succeed in solving it. We accept not outsiders' interference in it and certainly not the British Government's interference in it and, therefore, these two limiting factors to the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly are not accepted by us.

" How to make the job in the Constituent

Assembly a success or not is the only limiting factor. It does not have the slightest difference what the Cabinet Mission thinks or does in the matter."

III. UNION CENTRE

Dealing with the powers of the proposed Union Centre, Nehru said: "According to the Cabinet Mission's proposals there are three or four basic subjects in it, *i.e.*, defence, foreign affairs, communications and the representatives. What their stand today is, I do not know. But obviously we cannot accept that position. The real difficulty is that apart from the rulers' position, the governments in the Indian states are so unrepresentative that a proper procedure must be adopted to make them representative and representatives of such governments should go to the Constituent Assembly."

Jawaharlal's attention was drawn to some of the bigger states, like Hyderabad, not demobilising their war-time armies. He said: "It is highly undesirable for all these small, separate armies to continue. They are bound not to continue under the Union Government of India. There will be only one Central Army: maybe during the intervening period of transition, some of these may carry on."

IV. CONSTITUTIONAL QUAGMIRE

Since the Congress accepted the long-term plan and rejected the short-term plan, the Moslem League had been caught in the mud. The League had accepted both the plans and

Lord Wavell had committed himself to a pro-League politics, but as a result of Congress statesmanship, the Anglo-League conspiracy was defeated, and the disappointment of the British Cabinet Mission has been traced to the "innocent" mistake committed by the military Governor-General.

But the League was very much perturbed, because Jinnah had not been allowed by the Congress to nominate all the five Moslems to the Interim Government and he had not been permitted by the British to form the whole government even in the absence of the Congress. Jinnah showed his teeth, because he thought that the British had broken their pledges to the League and Congress had accepted the long-term plan only conditionally, but Jinnah had been able to bite neither the British nor the Congress.

The Moslem League threatened to boycott the long-term plan. Their threat materialised. Liaquat Ali Khan, the deputy of Jinnah, cut a very sorry figure in Indian and foreign circles by declaring that the League had accepted the long-term plan on condition that it was not a sovereign body. That made it clear to everybody that Moslem League was out to perpetuate British thralldom on India.

V. SIKHS GO ASTRAY

Jawaharlal Nehru speaking on July 21, 1946, at the Ramlila Grounds, New Delhi, said that circumstances had forced the British Government to agree to India's demands of

summoning a Constituent Assembly for framing a constitution for a free and independent India. The Congress, Nehru added, was entering the Constituent Assembly with the object of working it out and if they found that they were unable to achieve their purpose they would withdraw from it and wreck it.

If the Constituent Assembly was once set up, continued Nehru, it would become a completely independent organisation. It would be composed of elected representatives from different provinces. If the British Government or the Viceroy wanted to destroy it they could not do so. It could only be done by Indians themselves. It was his firm conviction that after the setting up of the Constituent Assembly no outside power could destroy or crush it.

During the last twenty-five years, he added, people had been following the Congress in the hope of achieving full national independence. Congress today was much powerful than ever before. He admitted that there was internal weakness in the Congress, but felt that it should not be allowed to stand in the way of their progress when they were engaged in fighting British imperialism. All that was required at this critical period of Indian history was unity and strength of the people. The Congress was a platform for all shades of opinions and it was working for the common goal of independence of the country.

Nehru referring to the action of the Sikhs who withdrew their nomination papers to the

Constituent Assembly said that in his opinion the Sikhs had not done the wise thing. They had done it in haste and anger. They had their grievances in the grouping system, but their hasty action would not take them forward.

Nehru had been elected president of the Congress at the most critical period of the country. His responsibility was very great and the task ahead of him difficult. At first he was shirking to shoulder the heavy responsibility. He had to spend sleepless nights and do a great deal of heart-searching before deciding to accept the presidentship. He would be able to go on working as long as the people continued to help and co-operate with him. It was, in fact, the strength and love of the people which moved him forward.

VI. CONGRESS TAKES THE OFFICE

When Lord Wavell invited the Congress to form the National Government, they were honourably bound to do so as the majority party in the country. Sikhs responded to the call of the Congress and readily withdrew their boycott of the Constituent Assembly. But the Moslem League remained the real hurdle. Immediately after receipt of the Viceroy's invitation, and the Congress Working Committee's approval thereof, Nehru proceeded to Bombay and had an interview with Jinnah on August 15, 1946. The talk for co-operation ended in smoke and Nehru explained the situation lucidly in a press conference the next day.

He said : " A few day ago I received a communication from the Viceroy, when I was at Wardha, which stated that in concurrence with the British Government, he (the Viceroy) proposed that the Congress President should make proposals for the formation of an Interim Government. It is fairly a simple communication and there is nothing more nor less than what I have stated. What that communication implies, it is for you to draw your conclusions.

" The Congress Working Committee decided to inform the Viceroy that I would be prepared to make proposals for the formation of the Interim Government. I had no other communication with the Viceroy in regard to this matter apart from the one mentioned above.

" The position today is somewhat vague, though undoubtedly the announcements made on behalf of the Viceroy and on our behalf do make a considerable advance. When I saw the Viceroy last at Delhi, there was no talk nor mention of this Interim Government. Some people imagine that there was some kind of a secret understanding between the Congress and the Viceroy in regard to this matter, but I say there is nothing of the kind."

He added : " The present offer to the Congress to form the Interim Government does make a difference. The Viceroy has made a new kind of approach. There is a psychological difference. Unlike previous occasions, we are now asked to form the entire Government, no doubt with the co-operation of others but taking the responsibility for it. Now it is not

a question of individuals being picked and chosen by an external authority. Maybe all this ends in our being caught in a trap : maybe that it leads us much further in the direction we want to go. We would eliminate all the obstructions in our way. But in any case we have to be very wary.

“Meanwhile we thought it desirable that we should do our utmost to gain the co-operation of all, and more especially the Moslem League in forming the Government. There are obviously considerable differences in the outlook, approach and objectives between the Congress and the Moslem League. It would have been rather futile to imagine that all those differences would suddenly vanish. Nevertheless, we did hope that our differences apart, we might still be able to co-operate and possibly the process of co-operation might help in resolving those differences.”

Nehru, then, referred to the correspondence exchanged between him and Jinnah and his meeting with Jinnah and said : “We had, as usual, a friendly talk. Jinnah put forward the Moslem League’s case which everyone is well acquainted with. In brief, he criticised both the so-called long-term and short-term plans. Jinnah felt that the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee did not differ from the previous stand taken by the Congress. Perhaps he was right.”

Nehru regretted that his meeting with Jinnah did not bring the Congress and the Moslem League politically nearer to each other.

"For the present I can say nothing more except that I am going to Delhi tomorrow. I shall meet the Viceroy and we shall discuss the question of the Interim Government further. The fact that we have agreed to make proposals does obviously put certain responsibilities on us. It takes us many steps further. We have taken this decision with the full responsibility and not in any light-hearted manner, because obviously all manner of consequences may follow.

"I would like you to realise that there are possibly many hurdles still and not to imagine, as some do, that there is no further difficulty left about the formation of the Provisional Government. It may well be formed for there may still be some obstruction or difficulty."

Nehru made it clear in answer to a question that the Congress had accepted the Viceroy's offer to form the Interim Government which would not merely be the Executive Council but a free Government.

Nehru said: "Strictly legally speaking there will be no change as regards the Viceroy's position, but in practice I trust he will be a kind of constitutional head. But if unfortunately, the Viceroy exercised his veto, it would lead to trouble. In fact, it cannot be exercised. If he does, it will have major consequences."

Asked if the Congress formed the Interim Government without the Moslem League's co-operation and the League started some kind of direct action, would it not lead to the Congress being used to put down the League, Nehru

said : " If the League starts some kind of direct action, obviously the Government will face that direct action—either come to terms with it or oppose it. There is no other course. If the Government is strong, direct action goes under, but if the Government is weak, the Government will go under."

Nehru was, then, asked what would be the attitude of the Provisional Government towards Indian states. He said : " The states as such do not come within the scope of the Provisional Government except in regard to many common problems between the states and the rest of India. But obviously such a Government, apart from the common problems, will be intensely interested in the formation of democratic governments in the states and it will try to further that end."

Nehru continued : " The decision of the Congress Working Committee to form the Interim Government was a vital decision and yet perhaps an inevitable decision in the sense that it follows a certain chain of happenings. From the Congress point of view, it was certainly a novel step. That step could not be taken normally without previous reference to the All-India Congress Committee and in any event that reference will have to be made and the final decision will rest with that Committee. At the same time, we felt that it would not be right for us to postpone action, in view of the various developments and happenings both in this country and abroad.

" The Congress decision to agree to form

the Interim Government involves many other consequences internally for the Congress. We have given some thought to this, but we have not decided upon any definite line of action, since we are not sure whether the acceptance of the Viceroy's offer would lead to something final or not.

"I might tell you that even now, we have not finally decided about the details of the proposal we have to make to the Viceroy. Since the Congress joining the Provisional Government is something entirely new, both for the Congress and the country, we have to consider what relations our Executive should bear to that Government and whether any member of the Executive could belong to that Government. The Working Committee has come to certain conclusions in regard to these matters."

Nehru emphasising the importance of maintaining the revolutionary character of the Congress organisation said: "The Working Committee attaches greatest importance to the internal organisation of the Congress, because it feels that whatever future may hold for us, the real sanction behind us is the Congress organisation. Therefore we must do our utmost not only to keep it going but to strengthen it, widen it, and make it more disciplined and ready for action, when action may be necessary.

"Therefore, in considering all these governmental affairs we have to think all the time the effect of each such development on the Congress organisation and how we should adapt

that organisation to these changing circumstances, so that it may not come into conflict and yet the most important thing of all, it should retain its revolutionary outlook. Obviously, some kind of change at the top by itself does not mean much. It may be the precursor of other changes big and small.

"It is because we look upon the Viceroy's offer from that point of view that we thought in terms of accepting the Viceroy's offer to form the Interim Government. Big changes have to come later. The formation of the Provisional Government and the convening of the Constituent Assembly are by themselves only initial steps in a certain process. If we think that those steps lead in the right direction then we take them.

"But if we think that they may come in our way we must avoid them. We have now come to the conclusion that these two steps, namely, the convening of the Constituent Assembly and the formation of the Interim Government lead us and help us to proceed in the right direction which will bring about fundamental changes in India. It is because of this, that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly as well as, if other things are satisfactory, to form the Provisional Government."

"Naturally when one takes such a step," he continued, "one wishes for the largest measure of co-operation possible. In spite of all that had happened during the last three or four weeks—many statements some of them

violent and threatening violent action against the Congress—we felt it our duty to make an earnest effort to get that co-operation not only from the Moslem League, but from others too. That co-operation is being offered to us by almost every group or community in India except, I regret for the moment, the Moslem League. In the circumstances, however, it is obvious that we cannot stand still because of this unfortunate lack of co-operation from the Moslem League. So far as we are concerned that door of co-operation will always be open. We shall whatever we may do, always be keeping in view this larger view-point and proceed with the largest measure of co-operation.”

Chapter Ten

COMPETITIVE EMOTIONS

Jawaharlal is a middle-of-the-road gentleman and is not given to sweeping statements. He has a balanced mind under the influence of, what John Gunther calls, "competitive emotions". One concrete example, depicting this aspect of Jawaharlal's character, occurred in 1946.

It was believed all round that Jawaharlal had recommended the withdrawal of the Sikhs from the Constituent Assembly. But actually it was not so. He rather reprimanded the Sikhs for this action of theirs. He said that they had not done the wise thing. They had done it in haste and anger. Before it was too late they realized their folly and elected their representatives to the Constituent Assembly just according to the Pandit's advice.

I. STATESMAN NOT POLITICIAN

"Nehru is the furthest possible contrast to the mob leaders like Hitler or Mussolini," says Gunther.

The truth is that Jawaharlal Nehru is a very good statesman but a very bad politician. He is too decent to be a good politician. Politics is a devil's game and has a touch of wicked wizardry about it. Mahatma Gandhi was never a diplomat. Even Nehru does not

possess the traits of a good diplomat. India had probably got only one politician of the stiff-necked Gladstone-Disraeli tradition. And he was Jinnah. With Nehru it is quite the reverse.

II. AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

"Nehru is a gentleman," says Gunther. "Worse, he is an English gentleman."

He devoted his life to freeing India from Britain. But the British imprint is deep upon him. He still follows a code of chivalry. Only the old-school tie has turned to homespun cheesecloth. Pandit, like an ordinary gentleman, has a strong sense of ingrownness and reserve. He hates political give-and-take and diplomatic hurlyburly. His political integrity is unshakable. Nothing can deflect him from the path he has chosen. He dislikes compromises. His mind is free from the slipperiness of politics. He makes definitions scrupulously and abides by them.

"He is," says Gunther, "certainly one of the finest characters in public life I have ever met."

Nehru once hoped that he would gradually convert Gandhiji to socialism. Years went by. And Nehru saw his mistake. He worried terribly over it. It seemed to him an incredible paradox. Gandhiji had an overflowing "love and solicitude for the underdog". And Gandhiji also supported "a system which inevitably produces it and crushes it". Nehru has long been impatient with Gandhiji's ideas

of trusteeship by the upper classes. He could not endure it. There is no reason why the prophet of non-violence should hold up a system based on violence.

"Now," says Gunther, "he has given up Gandhi as incorrigible on this issue."

Nehru is not the extreme left. Nor was Mahatma Gandhi the extreme right. The former is the left centre as the latter was the right centre.

Chapter Eleven

TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Jawaharlal is a fountain-head of inspiration for the youth and the budding leaders. What he said to the young in 1946 is equally true today and will remain so for ever. There is a touch of immortality in his sayings.

I. GIOVINEZZA !

"Giovinezza !" said Mussolini. Jawaharlal is not an admirer of Fascists. But he does admire them for having their war-cry a hymn to youth : Live Dangerously ! He has that motto for himself. And he wants young men to adopt the same motto. But living dangerously is not enough. It must be bottom-rocked by a strong sense of discipline.

II. FORGET PETTY SQUABBLES

"To the youth of the Punjab," said Nehru, "who are so full of generous enthusiasm but at the same time often lacking in discipline, I want to say that the time is coming soon when disciplined service will count far more than mere enthusiasm. I know that they are capable of this if they turn their minds to it. Great changes are coming over India and great responsibilities will await those who are capable of shouldering them. So prepare for them and forget the petty

questions and squabbles of the day. The Punjab must play a brave part in the days to come. That part ultimately depends on the youth."

III. ARE YOU AFRAID ?

"Wherever I go, I ask the people : 'Are you afraid ?'

"The answer is 'No' !

"When I ask them : 'Are you strong enough ?'

"I always get the answer : 'Yes' !"

* * * *

"If we allow our enthusiasm to be dissipated by petty quarrels and sectional factions, we may go down never to rise again."

* * * *

"Do not touch the feet of leaders ! It is a pernicious habit, a sign of slavery !"

IV. WE DON'T WANT DOLLS

While laying the foundation-stone of the Mahila Vidyapith at Allahabad on March 31, 1928, Jawaharlal delivered a short and sweet message to the young women of India. It was clear from his arguments then as now that he wants every young girl to be a soldier like himself. He wants the fair sex to live dangerously as well as the stronger sex.

He said : "A great French idealist, Charles Fourrier, once said, 'One could judge the degree of civilization of a country by the social and political position of its women.' And if we are to judge of India today we

shall have to judge of her by her women. The future that we build up will also be judged by the position of Indian women. I must confess to you that I am intensely dissatisfied with the lot of the Indian women today. We hear a good deal about Sita and Savitri. They are revered names in India and rightly so. But I have a feeling that these echoes from the past are raised chiefly to hide our present deficiencies and to prevent us from attacking the root-causes of women's degradation in India today.

"It was laid down that while man was the bread-winner, woman's place was in the home and her ideal should be that of a devoted wife and nothing more. Her chief delight should be in skilfully rearing her children and serving her revered elders. May I say that I do not agree with this ideal of women's life or education? What does it signify? It means that woman has one profession and one only, that is the profession of marriage, and it is our chief business to train her for this profession. Even in this profession her lot is to be one of secondary importance. She is always to be the devoted helpmate, the follower and the obedient slave of her husband and others. I wonder if any of you here has read Ibsen's *Doll's House*; if so, you will perhaps appreciate the word 'Doll' when I use it in this connection.

"The future of India cannot consist of dolls and playthings and if you made half the population of the country a mere plaything of the other half, an encumbrance on others, how will you ever make progress? Therefore, I say that

you must face the problem boldly and attack the roots of the evil. We have purdah and child-marriage and denial of rights to women in so many fields. Go to any country and you will see bright-faced boys and girls playing and growing strong in mind and body. Here children of the same age are kept in purdah, locked up in cages almost and denied in a large measure all freedom. They are married just when they should be growing physically and intellectually and are thus stunted and made miserable for life."

V. WHY THE YOUTH MUST REBEL ?

"It is," said Nehru, "the realization of the common bond of humanity that has given rise to the great youth movement of today. Many of you may be too young to remember the despair and the feeling of revolt in the minds of youth during and specially after the great war.

"Is it any wonder that the youths of the world rebelled and cast out their old-time leaders on whom even terrible lesson of the war was lost, and who still went on intriguing in the old way and prepared for yet another and a greater war ?

"Science had vastly increased production and there was enough for all and to spare but poverty continued and the contrasts between luxury and misery were more marked than ever before. But if mankind is foolish and errs, facts do not adapt themselves to errors and the world of our imagination conflicts with the world of reality and is it any wonder that

chaos and misery result ?

"Facts are not to blame for this. The troubles and the difficulties lie not in things but in our misconception of them and our misinterpretation of them. Our elders fail frequently because they are rigid in their minds and unable to change their mental outlook or adapt themselves to changing facts. But youth is not hidebound or rigid. Youth can think and is not afraid of the consequences of thought.

"You must have your ideal clear-cut before you. How else can you hope to build the great structure of your dream ? Can you build a palace on the foundations of a mud-hut, or a fine bridge with straw ? With definite ideas of your goal you will gain clearness of purpose and effectiveness of action and each step that will carry you nearer, you take to your heart's desire."

VI. DELICATE MOMENT IN INDIA'S HISTORY

"This is," said Jawaharlal, "a very delicate moment when we should muster all our strength and shake off all symptoms of weakness. We must be prepared to face new problems as they arise. We can do this only if we are united and strong."

VII. NO HINDU RAJ

"In India," said Nehru, "there would be no Hindu Raj as the Hindu Mahasabha dreamed, nor a Moslem Raj, nor a Sikh Raj. It will be a people's raj—a raj of all, Hindus, Moslems,

Sikhs, Christians and others—with power resting in the hands of the people as a whole.”

VIII. DUTY AND DISCIPLINE

Jawaharlal said, “I want every young boy and girl of India to become a soldier for the cause of the independence of the country. By a soldier I mean a disciplined and honest worker who can serve the country and keep the honour and prestige of the motherland. A few disciplined soldiers are far more useful to the country and to the struggle than a crowd of a thousand undisciplined men.”

Chapter Twelve

FIRST NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

It was with a touch of caution that the Indian leaders stepped into the shoes of the Viceroy's Council, but they soon converted it into a full-fledged democratic Cabinet. The entry of the Moslem League created serious difficulties and ultimately led to the partition of India, because they followed obstructionist tactics and their sole purpose was to wreck the Nehru Cabinet.

Jawaharlal Nehru formed the first National Government in India on September 2, 1946. It consisted of the following prominent personalities :

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

Sardar Baldev Singh—Defence.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel—Home including Information and Broadcasting.

Dr. John Matthai—Finance.

Mr. Asaf Ali—Communications (War Transport and Railways).

Dr. Rajendra Prasad—Agriculture and Food.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram—Labour.

Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan—Health, Education and Arts.

Mr. Syed Ali Zaheer—Legislative, Posts and Air.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari—Industries and

Supplies.

Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose—Works, Mines and Power.

Mr. C. H. Bhabha—Commerce.

He set forth his policy as follows :

1. Our duty is to look after those who are in the mud-huts and improve their condition. There lies our salvation, there lies our welfare.

2. It is wrong to think that the Congress has accepted either this plan or that plan. Nothing has been accepted. The Congress has only decided to enter the Constituent Assembly to frame a new constitution for a free and independent India. There was no other commitment of any kind.

3. India will throw in her weight in the cause of peace. In doing so she will take an independent stand and not act as a satellite. India's foreign policy will affect the whole world.

Nehru and his colleagues in the new Government brought a new sense of urgency to the Imperial Secretariat, where they were at their desks early on the second day of assuming office. Their early arrival gave a jolt to many officers and staff, who responded by plunging into their daily tasks with new energy and promptitude. Cutting across the tradition built up by the Executive Councillors of the past regime, members of the new Government were back in office after lunch—a further reminder to the staff that the leisurely ways of the past had been left behind.

The new feel in the general atmosphere was exemplified by the respectful attention that the visitors in the Indian dress received from chaprasis, who previously took little notice of any one not clad in European costume.

Encouragement of khadi and removal of untouchability, it was felt, must form part of the long-term programme. Mahatma Gandhi had correspondence and personal discussion with the Viceroy and with the previous Finance Member, Sir Archibald Rowlands, on the subject of removing the salt tax and it is believed that the official view then given was that this was a decision which must be left to a popular government.

I. BROADCAST TO THE NATION

Jawaharlal delivered his first broadcast to the Indian Nation on September 7, 1946. In the course of his message he said :

“ We shall look to the common and forgotten man in India and seek to bring him relief and raise his standard of living. We shall especially try to help those who are economically or otherwise backward. Today millions lack food and clothing and houses, and many are on the verge of starvation. To meet this immediate need is an urgent and difficult task and we hope other countries will help us by sending food-grains.

“ This old and dear land of ours is finding herself again through travail and suffering. She is youthful again with the bright eyes of adventure, and with faith in herself and her

mission. For long years she had been narrowly confined and had lost herself in brooding. But now she looks out on the wide world and holds out her hands in friendship to the other peoples of the world, even though that world may still be full of conflict and thoughts of war."

A friend sent the following message to Jawaharlal :

" May you weather every storm, first pilot of the ship of state. Bon voyage."

To this Jawaharlal replied as follows in this broadcast :

" A cheering message but there are many storms ahead and our ship of state is old and battered and slow-moving and unsuited to the age of swift change. It will have to be scrapped and give place to another. But, however old the ship and however feeble the pilot, when there are so many millions of willing hearts and hands to help, we can brave the high seas and face the future with confidence."

II. THE TASK BEFORE NEHRU

In a press conference on September 2, 1946, Jawaharlal said :

" If we are co-operating with those whom we have opposed all along in Government, much more so inevitably we seek the co-operation of every Indian in this country, because after all the foreign elements in this country are temporary residents here, or are temporary in office. Inevitably, they have to go, not physically—they are welcome to stay on in India—but in their official capacity ; because obviously India

is going to be run by Indians for the benefit of Indians, not to the injury of others, I hope anywhere, but certainly for the benefit primarily of the people who live in this country, to whatever religion or creed they might belong, in whatever province or part of India they may live."

He hoped in passing that the practice of giving titles in India would cease. "It has always seemed to me rather degrading to the individual to have these titles attached to his name, unless of course they represent some kind of literary excellence or some professional qualification. That is a different thing, but otherwise this business of titles is a relic of an age, which, I hope, the world is rapidly leaving behind.

"So whether you call us honourables or not, the fact is that we shall consider ourselves chief servants of the Indian people and the moment we forget that, we shall not be worthy of the job that has been given to us.

"We shall keep our eyes and ears close to the soil of India to see not only how people living in the big houses in New Delhi feel about anything, but how the villagers and factory-workers see everything."

Nehru called for a practical outlook. "What are we aiming at?" he asked.

"Freedom? Yes," he replied.

"Higher standard? Yes. But we are ultimately aiming at feeding, clothing, housing, educating and providing better sanitary and healthy conditions for four hundred millions.

If you approach it in that concrete way, the problem becomes a little more concrete, even though it is vast. Then you can limit it, if you like, to what you can do in five years or ten years' time and put definite objectives—we must produce so much food, clothing, provide so much education and housing, etc., because we cannot achieve everything simply because there is a change in the Government or simply because we desire it."

"Normally," he went on, "I have been charged with the External Affairs Department and the Commonwealth Relations Department—the two joined together. But for the moment, maybe for ten days or so, I am supposed to be in charge of all the other departments of my absent colleagues, namely, the portfolios of Defence, Finance—of which I know hardly anything at all—Commerce, Health, Education, Industries and Supplies. A queer collection !

"Today we started off in the Finance Member's room and for the space of ten or fifteen minutes I discussed 'high finance'. I went on to the Commonwealth Relations Department, where we discussed commonwealth affairs.

"Later in the afternoon I went to the External Affairs Department and spent an instructive hour there and then finally wound up with the Defence Department and tried to understand the various branches of the War Establishment in India. So I have had a varied education today and in the course of the next day or two I hope to tackle Health, Education, Commerce, Industries and Supplies.

Obviously this is more for my own education than for anything else !- In the main, my job is going to be External Affairs and Commonwealth Affairs.

“ We propose to function very much as a cabinet responsible as a whole for everything that we do. The practice so far here has been for various departments to function separately and reporting directly to the Viceroy and sometimes, when some conflict arose, or some matters had to be considered together, the matter was referred to the Viceroy's Council, but normally they were separate departments.

“ Of course, it is an odd situation and it has its difficult as well as humorous aspects when a group of persons representing a revolutionary tradition and dynamic organisation, representing thus for the permanent opposition in India which often took to methods of combating the permanent Government of India, come into close touch on a co-operative basis with a static organisation which has not been known in the past to move up rapidly as to make its movement very perceptible to outside observers.

“ Nevertheless, we have entered into this business with every desire to further it co-operatively, in order to achieve our objective—the complete and full independence of India. It will be a very great achievement in itself and also in the manner of doing it, if we can do it peacefully and co-operatively.

“ What will happen, the future will show, but it is because we believe in it that we have undertaken this task and we hope to proceed

on those lines."

Appealing for the co-operation of every Indian in this country, he said : " We are all going to remain here and even though we may get irritated with each other, it is obvious we have to live together and we have to work together and co-operate together. Therefore, it becomes incumbent on all of us to seek that wider co-operation and make every effort to achieve it, because after all the problems before us are so vast and intricate even apart from that major and dominating and primary problem of achieving Indian independence. The other problems—call them economic if you like—are allied problems tremendous in their significance—how to raise the standard of living of four hundred millions. Therefore, it is from the point of view not only of the theoretical objectives but the practical objectives in terms of the millions of human beings in India that we have to look at these problems.

" Naturally, in the future we shall have to have close contact with the press, because we have to live in close contact with our people. We shall go to them as we have gone to them in the past so much and meet them face to face at public gatherings, perhaps some of us may not have quite so much time for that in future. Nevertheless, we shall have to go to report to them, because they are our masters and we are their servants, though you might add some appellation like 'honourable' to our names.

"I do not know what effect a fairly lengthy residence in New Delhi might have upon us because it has been my experience that it has a very numbing effect on individuals, and results in a weakening of their intellectual faculties and certainly their physical faculties. Maybe, we might be affected that way, but I hope, not. New Delhi, as it has been constituted thus far, is something unique in India and something entirely apart from India. It does not represent India, although it contains many eminent Indians."

"How far it is possible to change this atmosphere of New Delhi and bring it more into line and more into touch with the real Indian atmosphere, I do not know and it is up to all of us to try to do so.

"Anyhow, whether New Delhi changes or not, we have to think in terms larger than New Delhi, of the towns and the factories and the market places of India. If we are a popular Government, we have to carry the people with us. We cannot function even for their good without the goodwill of the people. Therefore, it becomes essential for us to keep in touch through the press, personally and otherwise. It may be that we might have recourse to broadcasting. Certainly we will, but unfortunately the radio is not sufficiently developed here. There are relatively very few listeners and the listeners are normally newspaper readers. Nevertheless we should take advantage of every avenue of approach to our people and sometimes, it may be, to the

wider public of the world."

III. THE NEW ERA

Here are some interesting extracts from an article of H. N. Brailsford :

More than a century has passed since Lord Macaulay predicted in a famous phrase that Indians would one day demand "European institutions". That would be, he declared, "the proudest day in English history." And now the proudest day has come; the demand has been granted. If we in England have not yet abandoned ourselves to rejoicing; it is only because the future is clouded by the angry revolt of the Moslem League. In spite of this we felt that the formation by Pandit Nehru of the first National Government was one of the greatest and happiest events in India's history and Britain's.

It has happened in the customary British manner within the shell of traditional institutions and without a break with the past. But no one fails to understand that the decisive step has been taken in the transfer of power. The orderly process has begun, which will end with the withdrawal of the British Army and the recognition of India's independence in a negotiated treaty.

How has the miracle happened? Indians are still puzzled and somewhat incredulous. It has seldom happened in the world's history that an empire has relaxed its hold over a subject nation in this spontaneous way. Is the surrender genuine?

It has been a more gradual process than Indians commonly realise. I am old enough to remember the hey-day of imperialism in the last years of the nineteenth century. This was the epoch of Kipling, Cecil Rhodes, Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Roberts, the epoch of the River War for the conquest of the Soudan, the Boer War and Fashoda.

Poets sang of empire; heroes were shady adventurers who brought an African chief by trickery under the flag; what interested people above all else was the grabbing of territory and the founding of Chartered Companies to exploit it.

That noisy and vulgar age is long since over. With Wells and Shaw, Galsworthy and Aldous Huxley came a new mental climate. Thoughts turned inwards and interest shifted to social problems. The reconciliation of the Boers by the grant of self-government was the turning point.

With the First World War the horizon widened, and it began to be realised that the Age of Empires was drawing to an end and the Age of World-Government dawning. The old pride in empire which used to inspire Englishmen round the turn of the century is a faded memory today. Englishmen are still proud of their association with the free dominions, but they feel no complacency about the still dependent colonies.

If Indians do not realise how profoundly British outlook has been transformed in the course of forty years, the reason may be that

the English in India are always a generation behind the rest of their countrymen in their political thinking.

The change corresponds to the shifting of the social balance of power in the home country. For the old ruling class India was their inherited estate. Mr. Churchill thinks of it as he may think of the ancestral acres of Blenheim Park but the new rulers of England are free from these romantic associations.

Even more decisive is the change that had begun to transform the economic relationship, even before the Second World War. On the evidence of the trade balances, India had ceased to be a tributary country. Today the home country is her debtor, and the debt can be paid only by the export of machinery which will be the realistic foundation of India's economic independence. The old imperial relationship—the exploitation of a backward country as a source of raw materials—is coming visibly to an end. The political change will reflect and complete this economic change. That is the invariable law of history.

There were other and simpler reasons that influenced Britain. The effect of civil disobedience and passive resistance is slow, but nonetheless sure. It does not, on any scale yet witnessed, compel an empire instantly to yield, though it hastens the offer of concessions. Rather is it an appeal to the better nature and the professed liberalism of the imperial people. The imperial power will coerce, because it believes that its duty is to maintain order, but it

performs this operation with a growing sense of shame. To repeat it indefinitely becomes in the long run intolerable.

The Labour Government realised, when it took office, that its choice lay between coercion on an unprecedented scale and an adequate offer of independence. It is no accident that the man, who has formed the first National Government in Indian history, had spent twenty years of his life in British prisons.

What the more idealistic of Englishmen would say in these terms can be backed by realistic arguments. British military resources are limited; could they afford the man-power required to hold down all the millions of India indefinitely? It is one thing to use a professional army for such a purpose, and quite another to rely on conscripts.

But far-sighted soldiers used an even more telling argument than this. We are still living in a dangerous world and the fear of yet another world war haunts us. Could Britain face it with India still a rebel? The hope of finding in a free India a friend and perhaps an ally played its part in reconciling even conservative Englishmen to the offer of independence. And so "the proudest day" has dawned.

It is an able team that Jawaharlal Nehru has got together. The names of the Congress veterans who from its core call to mind contrasted temperaments, complementary talents and an impressive weight of experience. Another name also meant much to every close observer; that of Dr. John Matthai, by reason

of his training as an economist.

But rarely has a new government faced a problem so baffling. In its relations with Downing Street it will encounter few difficulties. There it may expect sympathy backed by adequate knowledge. The cabinet, in which the members of the Mission sit, need no longer rely, as previous cabinets have done, on the advice of officials.

The problem of India's relations with Britain is settled in principle. Everything now turns on the ability of this Congress Government to end the feud which the Moslem League seems bent on perpetuating. If any had underestimated it, the events in Calcutta have revealed it, in all its horror. Civil War is a word which responsible commentators are slow to use, but we have now to face even this possibility. We in London know too little of the detailed facts to risk a confident judgment, but no one doubts that the slaughter was organised and that some share of the responsibility falls on the Bengal Government.

Neither in this matter, nor in the controversy over the formation of the Interim Government, is there any inclination to shield the Moslem League. It has put itself wholly in the wrong.

Faced with a conspiracy that organises murder, arson and loot, the first duty of the central and provincial governments is simple. It is to protect life and to check, by the use of all their powers, the drift towards anarchy and civil strife. That done, the desperate political problem of the League's opposition has to be

faced.

The Interim Government has come into being for one single over-mastering purpose—to lay the foundations of independence.

It might be possible to crush all opposition under the mere weight of arms and numbers. I need not dwell on the notorious difficulties—the solidarity of Moslems when their fanaticism is roused and the part they play in the army and police. The graver reason for seeking a peaceful solution is that India could hope for no happy era of freedom, if a fourth of her population were to enter it with a sullen sense of defeat. The Indian Union can thrive, only if it is formed by the consent of both communities.

The solution of Pakistan is ruled out, as Mr. Jinnah conceived it, if only for the decisive strategical reasons on which the Mission chiefly relied. What follows? If we are bent on avoiding civil strife and cannot concede the demand for a separate sovereign Moslem state, there is no way out but by compromise.

Chapter Thirteen

FROM LANDIKOTAL TO LONDON

As Premier of the Interim Government, Jawaharlal Nehru has made two historic trips : one ærial pilgrimage to Landikotal, the time-honoured village on the ancient borderland of India, and the other ærial voyage to London, the nerve-centre of the mighty British Empire. These two political studies must have enriched the factual treasures in the humane heart of Jawaharlal, the prophet of the New Civilisation.

1

Jawaharlal, overcoming all official hurdles, arrived at Peshawar in the very middle of October, 1946. Immediately he received a warning from the Pathan Patriot to beware of the British machinations during his examination of the tribal areas.

Nehru acquainted the Frontier Gandhi with the plans of the Interim Government for tribal areas and also the programme of his tour. Badshah Khan, it is understood, gave his reactions and suggested a programme of economic uplift of the tribal people and also asked Nehru to carry out the programme for spread of education in the tribal belt and for establishment of hospitals, etc.

The Frontier Gandhi told the *United Press* that he had asked Nehru to beware of the

move of the Political Agents who might collect only their own men in the *jirgas* leaving aside tribesmen with the nationalist outlook. Badshah Khan is reported further to have advised Nehru to reorientate the tribal policy of the Government of India—a policy which, according to him, had been responsible for all the troubles in the tribal areas.

As everyone knows this prophecy of the Frontier Gandhi proved hundred per cent correct. The stooges of British imperialism tried to put every possible spoke in the wheels of nationalism across the Indus even during the brief visit of Jawaharlal.

I. BEFOOLING THE FOLK

These were agents of the Moslem League who took a leading part in befooling the innocent Pathans in the name of religion. Little wonder that the car of Jawaharlal was stoned even at Peshawar. But the Congress Ministry in the Frontier displayed an unexampled patience in dealing with their misguided brethren.

“If anybody else were in my position he would have been compelled to open fire today,” said the Frontier Premier, Doctor Khan Sahib, referring to the League demonstrations.

“But I know the people have been duped. Some unscrupulous people taking advantage of their ignorance brought these demonstrators here. It is not the demonstrators who are to be blamed. They are playing in the hands of some unscrupulous element who are bringing a slur on the fair name of the Pathans,” he added.

The British Political Department joined hands with the Moslem League, or rather the Moslem League joined hands with the British Political Department, because we have to blame our countrymen for prolonging the thralldom of our country. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the British agents behaved in the most shamefacedly manner during the flying visit of the Indian Premier.

Nehru met many *jirga*-men, tutored by the Political Department people, but all "machinations" and manœuvrings of the Political Department failed and their tactics were thoroughly exposed.

The hostiles, while welcoming Nehru, emphasised that they wanted to see a settlement with the Moslems in India.

"Political differences apart we have damaged our reputation of being a hospitable people in the eyes of the world," said Faqira Khan, Chief of Jaddun tribe and a prominent Moslem Leaguer, commenting on the League demonstration against Nehru on his arrival here.

He added, "I admire the patience and tact of Doctor Khan Sahib in dealing with his political opponents on the occasion of the arrival of the respected guest. If he had not shown great spirit of toleration on this occasion our province might have been engulfed in internecine trouble."

Nehru went about his tour undeterred. He was not daunted by the firing and stoning that was going around him. He did not value his life in a land where life had no value. He

took everything easy. He did not feel anxious about his personal safety. He ran, almost rushed towards the yelling Masuds. He faced them like a hero, because his stand was morally the strongest. The entire civilised world was amazed by his dauntless spirit.

Nehru silenced Masuds' *jirga* telling them : "Go your way, if you have nothing else to say."

The story regarding Faqir of Ipi's men having fired from a stolen gun at the time Nehru was scheduled to arrive at Razmak caused a sensation, but those who claimed to know the affairs here asserted that such sniping was not a new thing at all. Whenever any distinguished visitor came from outside this method was employed always.

Incidentally it helped establishing on visitors' minds the necessity of letting Political Agents do anything to keep down "such turbulent people".

The exciting incident at Landikotal on Khyber road which involved Nehru, the Khan Brothers, Mehr Chand Khanna, Yahya Khan, Ministers, besides world's newsmen—took place happily without causing any injury to any one.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Frontier Congress leader, repeated a previous assertion that the incidents which have marked Nehru's study trip of the rugged North-West Frontier were "work of the Political Department".

Asked a direct question whether he was of the same opinion, Nehru said : "These

things can be hinted at (by the Political Department). They don't need to be organised."

II. THE MESSAGE OF INDIA

The message of Nehru was the message of India to the brave people of the Frontier.

"Great revolution is shaking the world and a new era is in the offing," said Jawaharlal Nehru addressing Congress workers at the Premier's residence.

He said that the seeds of revolution were sown in the last world war, and they were spreading forward everywhere. The world was changing fast and India was moving still faster in this changing world. A new strength was evident in India and there was new life. Her hand and feet were tied but today she was fast breaking the chains of slavery. India was bound to get complete independence in a very short time and there was no power on earth that could put back the clock.

Referring to his visit to the Frontier after six years Nehru said that these years had changed the whole face of the world and also brought revolutionary changes in India where the Congress had passed through many struggles. He came to the Frontier this time in a new capacity as the Member of the External Affairs, though it meant no difference for him. But he came in that capacity in order to study the affairs here and discuss them with his colleagues. That was so because he said most of the officers in his department had begun their

careers in the Frontier and possessed what he described as the "Frontier mentality".

A free country alone can have relations with other free countries, but he had no doubt that other countries realised India's power and knew that tomorrow India is going to become even more powerful country and would have her place of honour among nations of the world. His visit to the Frontier was intended to enable him to understand the intricate problems of the Frontier Province. Did they not know that the first time he came to know about the bombing of Waziristan was from the Badshah Khan's statement. The bombing was stopped, but he wanted to see for himself the affairs here before being in a position to say anything. Proceeding, Nehru said that bigger issues awaited solution than what seemed to be created for them.

"The communal question was raised by those who wanted to impede their progress or those who were afraid of new changes, for they did not suffer the new rising surge." He advised consideration of bigger issues concerning India with a broader vision. While doing so, they should keep before them events happening all the world over. A devastating war had ended without peace being established, instead, everyone seems to be greatly disturbed.

That is due perhaps to the changing world, it is clear that one age is ending and a new era is dawning.

"Our problems," he said, "are innumerable. Whenever there is a famine or an outbreak of an epidemic lakhs of our countrymen die." "It

looks," he added, "as if we stand on death's door as physical wrecks and are thrown into death's jaws, just by a push given by conditions created by famine or disease."

III. UNSCIENTIFIC APPROACH

On October 19, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a thoughtful speech in the meeting of the British and Indian Medical Officers at Wana. He stated that the entire approach to the problems of the Frontier had been unscientific and therefore unsuccessful. Vast sums of money had been spent to no purpose in the tribal areas.

"The basic factor," said Jawaharlal, "is the economic life of the country. You cannot win the people over by punitive expeditions. You can win them over by treating exactly as if they are your kith and kin."

"Of course," continued Nehru, "crimes must be prevented and the criminals punished. But according to modern theory of crime, even in case of individual criminals the juries try to penetrate into the criminal act and the entire environment responsible for such crime."

Nehru stressed that such a scientific approach to the problem was needed. There was much of an analogy between an individual criminal and a crime-loving group.

"Just as," said he, "there are individuals with undeveloped mind, so there may be a whole people who are immature. What is required is that such people should be educated to develop their mind including scope for modern vocation."

2

“ One foot up and one foot down,
That’s the way to London town.”

So runs a nursery rhyme. And it is mightily true of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, because he was clamouring for a Round Table Conference in London ever since the frustration of his high hopes for carving out a slice of India. Lord Wavell was also at fault, because he held out rosy expectations to the lips of the League as well as the Congress, and ultimately found himself at a loss to quench their thirst. At last he had to appeal to Attlee to extricate him from the boggy politics wherein he had let himself down to gain ephemeral advantages. Consequently, the leaders of the Congress, the Moslem League, and the Sikhs were invited to London for the final last-minute effort to secure the participation of the League in the Constituent Assembly due on December 9, 1946. The Congress outright rejected the invitation, but later on accepted it on the insistence of the British Government.

IV. NEHRU FACES ATTLEE

Nehru, in a message sent to the Viceroy on November 26, explained why he did not believe any useful purpose would be served by the proposed London talks.

“ We are convinced,” he said, “ that our leaving India now would mean that at the instance of the League, the Cabinet Mission’s plan is going to be abandoned or substantially varied and that we are parties to it. It would

mean giving in to the League's intransigence and incitement to violence and this would have disastrous consequences. The first thing to be certain about is that plans agreed to will be implemented and that there will be a continuity about policy."

The British Government convinced Nehru that the meeting of the Constituent Assembly will not be postponed.

"There is no intention of abandoning either the decision of the Constituent Assembly to meet or the plan put forward by the Cabinet Delegation," said Prime Minister Attlee in a message to Nehru, dated November 27, which formed part of their correspondence.

"The object of our talks would be to try and ensure a successful meeting of the Constituent Assembly on December 9," Attlee added.

"Arrangements will be made to enable you to return by December 9."

It is worthy of note that Lord Wavell, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Baldev Singh travelled in the same plane. They were together for thirty-six hours. It is ironical to note that Jinnah and Nehru did not exchange a word during this long aerial voyage. I am not sure that this *Reuter* news was not correct. I wish it were wrong and the leaders should have contradicted it powerfully, because it reflects badly on the sociability of our great leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru, however, was right when he stated that the invitation to London was tantamount to the reopening of the whole question of constitutional settlements.

“ It would appear that the proposal involves a reopening and a reconsideration of the various decisions arrived at since the visit of the British Cabinet Delegation to India. The Moslem League accepted places in the Government on the very clear understanding that they also accepted the long-term proposals contained in the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16. Indeed they could not join the Government otherwise. But now the League have announced very definitely that they will not participate in the Constituent Assembly. We attach, as you are aware, great importance to the holding of the meeting of the Constituent Assembly on the date fixed, namely, December, 9. The invitation to us to go to London appears to us to reopen the whole problem which was settled to a large extent by the Cabinet Mission's statement and the formation of the Interim Government. Any impression in the public mind that these decisions are reopened would, in our opinion, be fatal.”

V. THE BRITISH VERDICT

Jinnah did try to open the whole question once again, but he was sadly disappointed by the firm ‘No’ from the British Government, but while the British Government yielded to Nehru in the matter of constitutional discussion, they yielded to Jinnah in the matter of constitutional decision. The British Government decided that the provinces had no choice to vote against the grouping system until first elections after the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, although

the Congress was free to refer the matter to the Federal Court which in itself was a British creation and was not likely to give its decision against the verdict of its imperial masters. Thus the history of the Round Table Conference was repeated, and a Pakistan Award bagged the Communal Award.

Chapter Fourteen

THE CONSTITUTION-MAKER

The soul of Jawaharlal Nehru is the soul of India. Such a man is excellently qualified to voice the feelings of his countrymen and embody them in a national constitution. If a great book, according to Milton, is the bloodless substitute for a man, a great constitution like that of U.S.A. is the bloodless substitute for great men like George Washington. Jawaharlal Nehru, like his American predecessor, is destined to go down in history as a unique constitutionalist. And let us not forget that Nehru suggested that the Indian Constitution should be moulded closely upon the pattern of the American Constitution—a right type of compliment to the makers of the American Constitution which the American press highly applauded.

“Here was the soul of India speaking.” That is how foreign journalists reacted to the masterly, thought-provoking and inspiring oration by Nehru while sponsoring the “declaration of objectives” resolution in the Constituent Assembly on the 13th day of December, 1946.

In stirring sentences, Nehru emphasised the historic importance and the solemnity of the occasion of the Constituent Assembly, adding that the declaration was indeed a pledge and an undertaking.

Nehru exhorted the framers of the amendments to approach the task of solemn responsibility not in legalistic quibbling but in "a spirit of adventure".

Deploring the absence of the League nominees, Nehru urged: "Duty calls us to bear the absentees in mind."

Nehru's tribute to the father of the nation—the mighty Mahatma—and all fighters for freedom received universal acclamation. The most important part of his address, however, related to his reactions to the London talks, which were, for the first time, shared with representatives of the Indian people.

In pin-drop silence, Nehru admitted, without any regret or rancour, that he came back without any message of cheer and overloaded with disappointment.

"It was a blow to me," he continued, "that just when we were beginning to stride ahead, obstructions were placed in our way, new limitations were announced and a new procedure suggested."

Rising to heights of eloquence and patriotic fervour, Nehru warned the British statesmen, who, somehow, "lacked imagination and daring, while holding great offices", that "we have gone through the valley of shadow often enough—we are used to it and, if necessity arises, we shall go through it again."

Nehru, however, added that fresh trouble would harm Great Britain more than it would harm India and may be injurious to the whole world.

Nehru did not mince words to bring home that India would not tolerate imposition of any sort.

Jawaharlal Nehru moving the resolution said : " This resolution is not a part of the constitution that we are going to draw up, and it must not be looked upon as such. This House has perfect freedom to draw up a constitution and when others join this House, they will have perfect freedom to fashion out that constitution. This resolution steers in between two extremes (of saying too much and too little) and lays down only certain fundamentals, which, I believe, no group, no party and hardly any individual in India, can dispute. Nobody challenges them in India ; nobody ought to challenge them. If anybody does challenge them we accept that challenge and we hold to our position."

I. THE ARCHITECTURE OF INDIA

Here in the Constituent Assembly the leaders of India were laying the foundations of the new political architecture for our motherland under the personal supervision of Mahatma Gandhi, the great political architect. Thus spoke Nehru :

" Nevertheless through all this long period we have thought of the time when we shall have an opportunity not merely to struggle, not merely to destroy but to construct and create. And now that it appeared that the time is coming for constructive effort in a free India, we looked forward to it with joy and

when fresh difficulties are placed in our way at such a moment it hurts and it shows that whatever the forces behind all this may be, people, who are able and clever and very intelligent, somehow lack the imagination which should accompany great offices, for if you have to deal with any people you have to understand them imaginatively, emotionally and of course intellectually. And one of the unfortunate legacies of this past has been that there has been no imagination in the understanding of the Indian problem."

India did not stand in need of any foreign advice. Jawaharlal Nehru tried in vain to get co-operation of all the conflicting elements but his golden hopes ended in smoke. Further he said :

"So far as our own countrymen are concerned, we must inevitably try our utmost to gain their co-operation in the largest measure. Co-operation, yes, but co-operation cannot, does not and will not mean giving up of the fundamental ideals on which we have stood and on which the nation should stand. Because that is not co-operation to achieve something, but a surrender of everything that has given meaning to our lives.

"Apart from that, as I said, we seek the co-operation of England, even at this stage, which is full of suspicion of each other. We feel that if that co-operation is denied, maybe, that will be injurious to India, certainly to some extent, but probably more so to England, and to some extent to the world at large.

"We live today in a period, when having just come out of a mighty war, people talk vaguely and wildly of new wars to come. At such a moment, this new India is taking birth, renascent, vital, fearless. Perhaps it was a suitable moment, for this new birth to take place out of the turmoil of the world. But we have to be clear-eyed at this moment, we who have the heavy task of constitution-building. We have to think of the tremendous prospect of the present, and the greater prospect of the future and not get lost in seeking small gain for this group or that.

"In this Constituent Assembly we are functioning on a world stage, and the eyes of the world are upon us, the eyes of our entire past are upon us, and though the future is still unborn, the future too looks at us. And so, I would beg of this House to consider the resolution in this mighty prospect of the past, of the turmoil of the present and of this great unborn future that awaits us."

Jawaharlal Nehru advised the constitution-makers to rise above the party and to think of the nation. We should try to think of the world as a whole as one united family. We should think of the great problems that face us in the widest, most tolerant and the most effective manner, just in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, to whom Jawaharlal referred as follows :

"There is another person who is absent here and who must be in the minds of many of us, as he is in my mind as I stand here today, the

greater leader of our people, the father of our nation who has been the architect of this Assembly and all that has gone before it and possibly of much that will follow. He is not here because in pursuit of his ideals he is ceaselessly working in a far corner of India, but I have no doubt that his spirit hovers over us and blesses our undertaking."

II. THE OATH OF TENNIS COURT

Nehru went on : " Because this is a Constituent Assembly, I think also of the various Constituent Assemblies that have gone before, of what took place at the making of the great American nation, when the fathers of that nation met and fashioned out a constitution which has stood the test of these many years—more than a century and a half—and of the great nation which has been built up on the basis of that constitution. And my mind goes back to the mighty evolution which took place, also over one hundred and fifty years ago, and to the Constituent Assembly that met in the gracious and lovely city of Paris which has fought so many battles for freedom and the difficulties that Constituent Assembly had ; how the King and other authorities came in its way and still it continued. The House will remember that when these difficulties came and even lodging and a place to meet were denied to that Constituent Assembly they betook themselves to an open tennis court and met there and took the oath which is called the Oath of the Tennis Court.

“ They continued to meet in spite of kings and in spite of others and did not disperse till they had finished the great task they had undertaken. I trust that it is in that solemn spirit that we too are met here, whether we meet in this chamber or other chambers or in the fields or the market place, we shall go on meeting and continuing this work till we complete it.”

III. THE INDIAN REPUBLIC

Referring to the expression “ independent sovereign republic ” in the resolution, Nehru said : “ I will not go into the argument about monarchy and the rest, but obviously we cannot produce a monarchy for India out of nothing. It is not there. If it is to be independent and sovereign state, we are not going to have external monarchies. It must inevitably be a republic.”

Some friends had asked him why he had not put in the word “ democratic ”. His reply was : “ It is conceivable, of course, that a republic may not be democratic, but all our past is witness to the fact that we stand for democratic institutions. Obviously, we are aiming at democracy and nothing less than democracy. What form of democracy, what shape it might take, is another matter. Democracies of the present day, many of them in Western Europe and elsewhere, have played a great part in the world’s progress. Yet it may be doubtful if those democracies may not have to extend their content, change their shape somewhat,

before long, if they have to remain completely democratic.

"We are not going just to copy, I hope, a certain democratic procedure or institution of so-called democratic countries. We may improve upon it in any event, whatever system of Government we may establish here must fit in with the temper of our people and be acceptable to them.

"We stand for democracy. It will be for this House to determine what shape we shall give to that democracy—the fullest democracy, I hope. The House will notice that in this resolution, although we have not used the word 'democratic'—because we thought that it was obvious that a republic contains that word and we did not want to use unnecessary and redundant words—we have done something much more than use the word.

"We have given the content of democracy in this resolution, and not only the content of democracy but the content, if I may say so, of economic democracy.

"Others may take objection to this resolution on the ground that we have not said that it should be a socialist republic. I stand for socialism and I hope India will stand for socialism and that India will go towards the constitution of a socialist state and I do believe that the whole world will have to go that way. The form of socialism again is another matter for your consideration, but the main thing is that in such a resolution, if in accordance with my own desire I do put in that we want a

socialist state, we put in something which may be agreeable to many and may not be agreeable to some and we wanted this resolution not to be controversial in regard to such matters. Therefore, we have laid down not theoretical words and formulæ but rather the content of the thing we desire.

“We are going to make a constitution for India and it is obvious that what we are going to do in India, will have a powerful effect on the rest of the world. Even today, on the verge of freedom as we are, India has begun to play an important part in world affairs. That part will grow, and therefore it is right that the framers of our constitution should always bear this larger international aspect too in mind, we approach the world in a friendly way. We want to make friends with all countries. We want to make friends in spite of the long history of conflict in the past with England also.”

IV. THE RESOLUTION PASSED

The resolution of Jawaharlal Nehru, declaring India a republic, was passed on January 22, 1947. It was passed unanimously, all members standing.

Jawaharlal Nehru, in a stirring and impassioned reply to the debate in the Constituent Assembly on his resolution on objectives, said : “There has been plenty of opportunity for those who wanted to come. Unfortunately, they have not yet decided to come and they still hover in this state of indecision. I regret

that and all I can say is this : ' We shall welcome them at any future time. They may come, but it should be made clear without any possibility of misunderstanding that no work will be held up in future, whether any one comes or not.'

" There has been waiting enough, not only waiting for six weeks, but many in this country have waited years and years and the country has waited for some generations now.

" How long are we to wait ? If some of us who are more or less prosperous can afford to wait, what about the waiting of the hungry and the starving ? "

Nehru went on : " We claim in this resolution to frame a constitution for a sovereign independent Indian republic, necessarily democratic. What else can we have in India ? Whatever the state may have or may not have, it is impossible and inconceivable and undesirable to think in any other terms but in terms of a republic in India.

" What relation will that republic bear to other countries of the world, to England, to the British Commonwealth and the rest ? For a long time past we have taken a pledge on Independence Day that India must sever her connection with Great Britain, because that connection had become an emblem of British domination. At no time have we thought in terms of isolating ourselves in this world from other countries or of being hostile even to countries which have dominated over us. On the eve of this great occasion, when we stand

on the threshold of freedom, we do not wish to carry a trail of hostility with us against any country. We want to be friendly with all. We want to be friendly with the British people and the British Commonwealth of Nations."

Nehru proceeded: "I commend this resolution to the House—not only to the House but to the world at large—making it perfectly clear that it is a gesture of friendship to all and behind it there lies no hostility. We have suffered enough in the past, we have struggled sufficiently and we may have to struggle again, but under the leadership of a very great personality we have sought always to think in terms of friendship and goodwill to others, even those who have opposed us. How far we have succeeded I do not know, because we are weak human beings. Nevertheless, the impress of that message has been left in the hearts of millions of people in this country and even when we err or go astray, we cannot forget it. Some of us may be little men and some of us big. But whether we are small or big, for the moment we represent great causes. And therefore something of the shadow of greatness falls upon us and we also become great.

"And today in this Assembly we represent a right cause and this resolution that I have placed before you gives some form to that cause. I hope that this resolution will lead soon to a constitution on the lines suggested in it and I trust that that constitution itself will lead very soon to the real freedom that we have craved for, and that real freedom will be

realised in terms of food for our starving people, clothing for them, housing for them and all manner of opportunity for progress.

"I hope it will lead also to the freedom of the other countries of Asia, because in a sense, however unworthy we may be, we have become—let us recognise it—the leaders of the freedom movement in Asia and whatever we do, we should think of ourselves in these larger terms.

"When some petty matter divides us and we have difficulties and conflicts amongst ourselves over small matters, let us remember not only this resolution but this great responsibility that we shoulder, the responsibility of the freedom of four hundred million people of India, the responsibility of the leadership of a large part of Asia, the responsibility of being some kind of a guide to vast numbers of people all over the world."

Chapter Fifteen

HISTORY BEGINS ANEW

The Moslem League carried steel and fire through the land and compelled the Indian National Congress to agree to the Partition Plan. This happened with the connivance of Lord Mountbatten who later became the first constitutional head of free India. Nehru knew that the partition pill was the bitterest but still he could not help swallowing it. He was also aware that Hindus and Moslems were then at daggers drawn and had sown the wind and would reap the good harvest of whirlwind. In the wake of all this came the establishment of a theocratic state known as Pakistan.

August 15, 1947, will long be remembered as the red-letter day—the day when India ushered in the new era. It was a day of nation-wide merry-making and rejoicing and the people welcomed the goddess of freedom in the right royal manner, though the heart of Mother India was tearful for the innocent victims of fanatic fury and frenzy at the hands of the so-called faithfuls in Pakistan.

“The Appointed Day has come—the day appointed by destiny,” said Nehru, “and India stands forth again after long slumber and struggle, awake, vital, free and independent. The past clings on to us still in some measure and we have to do much before we redeem the

pledges we have so often taken. Yet the turning point is past, history begins anew for us, the history which we shall live and act and others will write about."

"It is," he continued, "a fateful moment for us in India, for all Asia and for the world. A new star rises—the star of freedom in the East, a new hope comes into being, vision long cherished materialises. May the star never set and that hope never be betrayed !

"We rejoice in the freedom, even though clouds surround us, and many of our people are sorrow-stricken and difficult problems face us.

"We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers in their good and ill fortune alike.

"The fortune beckons to us. Whither do we go and what shall be our behaviour ? To bring freedom and opportunity to the common man, to the peasants and workers of India. To fight and end poverty and ignorance and disease. To build up a prosperous, democratic and progressive nation, and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life to every man and woman.

"We have hard work ahead. There is no resting for any one of us till we redeem our pledge in full, till we make all the people of India what destiny intended them to be. We

are citizens of a great country on the verge of bold advance, and we have to live up to that high standard. All of us to whatever religion we may belong are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action."

"To the nations and peoples of the world," he concluded, "we send greetings and pledge ourselves to co-operate with them in furthering peace, freedom and democracy.

"And to India, our much-loved motherland, the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service."

Chapter Sixteen

RIOTS, REFUGEES AND RELIEF

The Himalayan problems of refugees, relief and rehabilitation are at once a matter of credit and discredit, honour and dishonour, pleasure and displeasure for Jawaharlal Nehru who was the Premier of India when the Partition of India took place in August, 1947. He could neither peep into the evil intentions of the League leaders, who were his colleagues on the Cabinet, nor could he foresee the magnitude of the bloody riots, nor did he provide for them, even though he was supposed to be a premier and the portfolio of Defence was in the Congress stronghold.

The Partition was not so much a tragedy, and was perhaps inevitable ; but the nefarious effects of the Partition were a real tragedy, and were certainly not inevitable, if the Congress leaders had the foresight and the insight into political situation and the League mentality. While agreeing to Partition, the Congress leaders were so much drunk (excuse me to say) with prospects of India's freedom that they failed to provide for a peaceful exchange of population, although Jinnah had definitely been insisting on the exchange of population at least a couple of years in advance.

"Pandit Nehru is so much obsessed with international politics," Jinnah used to say

ironically, "that he can hardly be expected to understand Indian politics."

However I may differ from Jinnah personally and however I may agree with Nehru politically, I cannot help thinking that Jinnah's estimation of Jawaharlal was psychologically correct, at least in his complete misunderstanding of danger and devilry of the Partition.

Edmund Burke, an eminent English statesman, used to say that a statesman should be able to look at least five years ahead of his times. Although Jawaharlal is a statesman, no doubt, not only he failed to look five years ahead but he could not see even five years behind him, because the riots were already on when Partition was agreed upon; and Pakistan had been designed to be a purely Islamic state since its very conception in 1940 and Jinnah and his disciples had been hammering home to us that no minorities would be tolerated in Pakistan. It is strange that our leaders did not hear the oft-repeated voice.

I. THE RIOTS

The history of the Hindu-Moslem riots is the history of Moslem League which has been fomenting some kind of trouble for the last twenty-five years. Riots have been a main strategy of the Moslem League for the achievement of Pakistan and it started its Direct Action through large-scale mass killings in Calcutta in August, 1946, under the guidance of its leaders working in Calcutta.

Riots were on throughout 1946 and 1947 and

forced the Congress to agree to Partition, although anti-Partitionism was an article of Congress faith and they had opposed the Partition of Bengal in 1906 tooth and nail and the British were forced to withdraw their plan. It is not strange that the British who were defeated in the Partition of Bengal revenged themselves in the Partition of India. The strange thing is that the Congress leaders who had won a petty issue in the Partition of Bengal yielded to the bigger issue of the Partition of India.

Blood was flowing in the drains of the present territory of West Punjab, from Lahore to Peshawar, when the Partition Plan was agreed upon by the British, the League, the Congress and of course the Sikhs. The Partition Plan was announced on June 3, 1947, and all the leaders broadcast from the All India Radio. Lord Mountbatten committed the British Government. Jinnah committed the Moslem League. Jawaharlal gave an undertaking on behalf of the Congress. Baldev Singh agreed on behalf of the Sikhs.

Of the four signatories it must be admitted that Lord Mountbatten was the cleverest. He forced the pace of Partition so fast that he did not give anybody time to think, and the Partition has been described as a time-bomb left by the British at the time of their departure. Congress was partially responsible for this fast pace, because they with a lot of justification suspected the British intentions and their dilly-dally tactics. What they failed to suspect was the intentions of the League whom they regarded

as converted to a simpleton sincerity after the acceptance of the Partition.

Again it may be said to the credit of Jinnah that he wanted a slow pace of Partition ; but perhaps the very fact that Jinnah wanted a "slow pace", the Congress suspected this move and insisted on a "fast pace" for independence. But Jinnah did not want a slow pace to protect the minorities but rather to grab Pakistan's share of Indian assets and Indian Army and he believed that the British, if they stayed a little longer, would give protection to the Moslems in East Punjab even if they were not able to protect the Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab. Here Jinnah had miscalculated.

Partition was to take place on August 15, 1947, but the British had lost control of the Pakistan-to-be at least a month in advance. West Punjab was the home of the sword and the fire and Hindus and Sikhs were being massacred by thousands every day. The so-called "civil" looters were fully backed by the Moslem police and the Moslem army. The trial of the Nawab of Mamdot, the ex-Premier of West Punjab, throws interesting sidelights on gigantic preparations made for the extermination of Hindus and Sikhs.

Little wonder, the riots started in the East Punjab also before the actual Partition and Jinnah was sore with the British Governor of the Punjab for his inability to protect the Moslems in the East Punjab. Jinnah was not sore with the British Governor for his inability to protect the Hindus and Sikhs in

the West Punjab.

It was in a blood-bath that the sun of the greatest Islamic State—Pakistan—arose on August 14, 1947, and almost the first act of Jinnah, as Governor-General of Pakistan, was to dismiss the British Governor of the Punjab. Poor Gracy! His fault was that he compelled Khizar Hayat Khan to resign, broke the solidarity of the Punjab politics, and left no stone unturned to put the Moslem League ministry in the saddle and he was thrown away in the dustbin by the ungrateful Leaguers like an orange that has been sucked dry.

Thus the independence of India, celebrated with gusto in Delhi, Bombay and other cities of India, was no pleasure to the millions of Hindus and Sikhs who, lamed and looted, orphaned and widowed, were fleeing into India during the biting winter months but not even a winding-sheet to cover the corpses that lay by thousands all along the route.

Jawaharlal, the First Premier of India, was caught napping.

II. THE REFUGEES

Jawaharlal was caught napping but not for long. The flooding tide of weeping and wailing refugees soon jerked him out of his slumbers.

The refugees, mystified and terrified, poured into India by every possible means of transport, by aeroplanes, by trains, by trucks, by carts, on horseback, on cycles, on bulls, by taxis, by lorries and on foot. They also fled from

Pakistan by ships and country-craft via Karachi.

By far the largest number of refugees, deprived of all their belongings and many members of every family, came on foot in endless caravans, sometimes sixty miles long, and all the time open to the hazards of being attacked by Moslems all along the route. Corpses lay along the routes and roads in Pakistan and Amritsar was the dumping ground of millions of wounded, bleeding, amputated, miserable, hungry and homeless, weeping and wailing flood of humanity never known in the chronicles of the world before.

The trains that did reach Amritsar, which was the happy home of the refugees, in spite of all its squaller and misery, contained more corpses than living men who were crowded even on the top of the trains and took weeks to cover half a hundred miles.

The Pakistan Army was the busiest in looting and killing the Hindus and Sikhs. The Baluch Regiment is said to have played by far the largest part. Most of the refugees that were lucky to reach India were from large cities which were well-linked with India by means of communication. Very few Hindus and Sikhs were at all able to escape from the rural areas of Pakistan. Many of them were looted and massacred, although some of them were converted and allowed to breathe for a while. Later on even the converts were murdered. Pakistan's latest Acts are designed to dispossess the converts and hound them into India.

The flow of refugees into India from Pakistan has not ended even three years after the Partition and the few that stuck to the soil through conversion or cleverness are now being plucked from their homes, so that Pakistan which means "The Land of the Pure"—another Germany of Hitler's conception—should really become pure.

The Hindus in East Bengal were spared for a time, but now the tragedy of the Punjab is being reacted in Bengal from where Hindus are now being driven out according to a plan so that Pakistan should become really and truly an Islamic state.

In his press conference on February 7, 1950, Jawaharlal was asked whether recent outbursts against the Hindus in Eastern Pakistan were traced to coal shortage.

"It is rather unfortunate," said Jawaharlal, "if lack of coal leads one to go about to rape women."

The story of ousting the Hindus from Eastern Pakistan is just beginning and it is not wise on the part of an objective biographer to dip into future but one thing is clear that no Hindus and Sikhs can stay in Pakistan.

III. THE RELIEF

Nobody can deny that Jawaharlal has done all that was humanly possible for him to do as the head of a state whose personnel is neither so honest nor so sincere nor so enthusiastic about the relief of the refugees as Jawaharlal himself is.

If I put it figuratively, Jawaharlal has thrown the enfeebled refugees on the back of a dead horse and has been whipping the dead horse for the last three years wondering why the horse does not move at all. There is no use telling that the horse is dead, because he is not going to believe anybody except his senses like a scientist (And is he not a science graduate ?) and unluckily his senses deceive him continually, and he has, scientifically speaking, a lot of justification for yielding to this illusion, because the horse, though dead and decaying, can still speak musically and poison the ears of the highest in the land, for the horse is only a captivating robot designed by the best British political engineers and is known as the bureaucracy.

A refugee addressing a mass meeting of the refugees said correctly :

"You cannot blame the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation. If they rehabilitate you, how can they rehabilitate themselves ? The very day the refugees are rehabilitated, the Department with its thousands of employees goes to pieces. Well, human nature as it is, they must think of themselves before they think of you. Charity begins at home."

So the refugees cannot blame Jawaharlal who is personally the most honest man in the Indian Republic. Jawaharlal cannot blame the army of civil servants and subordinates, ministers, deputy ministers, advisers, directors, assistant directors, officers, contractors, builders and everybody who has a finger in the pie,

because personally, so far as their personal interest is concerned, they are very sincere too.

Government is spending lakhs of rupees but upon those who are either no refugees at all or not at all deserving of help from the Government. Christ was right when he said :

“To those that have shall be given ; and those that have not shall be taken away even that they have.”

Those refugees who were rich and influential in Pakistan, with political connections in the Congress ranks, are having all the plums of Jawaharlal's Relief and Rehabilitation. Those who were rich but without political links in Pakistan are usually miserable, although sometimes their business acumen and business connections have saved them from sinking to the bottom of society, although many of them have sunk indeed and are being punished severely, perhaps for their sins in their previous births.

Those poor refugees who are talkative and can dramatize their misery by squatting on the door-steps of Jawaharlal Nehru and other highups do manage to get something, perhaps, “a bone to the barking dog”, as a Congressman in Bombay put it. Those poor people who are silent sufferers and believe in the theory of karma are on the pavements. Their voice cannot reach the ears of the robot-horse which, though lifeless, has a musical tongue but no ears just like a serpent.

The best and the noblest of refugees, who have kept clear of Government aid and have

lived for years on their ornaments, have borne the brunt of the Partition and paid a price for which they have not even been thanked nor have their troubles been acknowledged by anybody nor does any relief await them anywhere except perhaps in the next world.

Jawaharlal has moved heaven and earth to help the refugees. He has put every truck, every tent, every blanket at the disposal of the refugees in the winter of 1947 and his Government is spending crores of rupees every year ; and if charity is misplaced, it is not the fault of Jawaharlal but rather the fault of the Indian society itself.

It is the low level of moral integrity that is responsible for waste of the national revenue under the label of " the Relief and Rehabilitation ". Again, it was the low level of moral integrity in India and Pakistan that was at all responsible for riots and refugees. One disease cannot be cured by another disease.

What Jawaharlal should really worry about is not the economic rehabilitation of the refugees but rather the moral uplift of the whole nation.

Chapter Seventeen

FIGHT FOR KASHMIR

On the eve of independence the princedom was hotbeds of British intrigues and Kashmir was no exception.

The Maharaja of Kashmir, who once considered Jawaharlal and Abdulla as his deadliest enemies, turned into a supplicant of their help and the Quit-Kashmir campaign became a Fight-for-Kashmir movement.

I. HOW IT HAPPENED

In the wake of independence came miseries and misfortunes to millions of Indians. They were rendered homeless. They were driven from pillar to post. And above all they were deprived of their near and dear ones. Day in and day out, new and unimaginable calamities cropped up on all sides. In those troubled times the Indian leaders tried their utmost to put down the evil forces with all the possible resources at their disposal. They wanted to heal and soothe the wounds of their fellow-brethren who suffered for no fault of theirs. Evacuation of refugees to safer places and their rehabilitation were the major problem for them to tackle.

At a time when Nehru was piloting the ship of state in a stormy tempest, the raiders took undue advantage of the situation thinking that

the Indians would not rise to the occasion. They meant to terrorise Kashmir into submission by tyrannous methods. They did everything they could to achieve their Satanic ends and satisfy their lust for territorial power. Huge hordes of raiders advanced into the holy land of Kashmir and polluted the valley by their impure and criminal deeds. Village after village was either razed to the ground or set ablaze, women were outraged and abducted, houses and hamlets were looted and plundered, peasants were taken unawares and made victims. The whole valley was then a veritable hell where law of the jungle prevailed. Rape, abduction and arson on a large scale were the order of the day. Kindness, sympathy, pity and mercy were conspicuous by their absence.

Jawaharlal could not stand to see this massacre like helpless and listless spectator. Milk of human kindness flowed in his veins. He felt deeply for the suffering humanity. How could he rest when his brethren in Kashmir were exposed to the tortures of body and soul? He plunged into the battlefield headlong to fulfil his pledges he gave to Kashmir and Abdulla. It was no doubt a tough job but he had guts for it. He could tell the raiders bluntly that their presence in the valley as looters and freebooters could not be tolerated and the world saw that the Nehru Government did hound these villains out of Kashmir. It was out of sheer large-heartedness that he referred the matter to U.N.O. simply to expose to the world the crooked

character of the " Puritans ".

II. WHO IS INVADER ?

It is the sequence of events in Kashmir that will decide who is there as liberator and who as invader. Kashmir appealed to India for help when trans-Frontier marauders, organized, aided and abetted by Pakistan, invaded the state, occupied Muzaffarabad, sacked Baramula, killing and looting the people and committing arson, and were threatening Srinagar itself. Indian troops went by air to Kashmir to save Srinagar in the nick of time and the Indian Army threw back the aggressors. When India was about to make a clean sweep of the raiders, Pakistan, which had till then been denying that she had anything to do with the invaders, sent her army into Kashmir, like a thief at night, as against the open decision which India took when she went to the assistance of Kashmir. This action she kept a secret until it became impossible for her to do so after the arrival of the U.N. Commission in India. That must decide the controversy as to who is the invader, aggressor and robber in Kashmir. India made no promises to Pakistan, which has no *locus standi* in the dispute. India's promise was to the people of Kashmir, and she still stands by it. Pakistan wants plebiscite in Kashmir. But how the Kashmir people can be asked to decide their fate while those who ravaged her fair land are still pointing a bayonet at her breast,

"It is meaningless now," declared Abdulla, "to talk of a plebiscite in Kashmir."

"We, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, demand that Pakistan immediately withdraw her forces from our territories. Once every inch of our state comes back to us, we will hold a plebiscite but not until then," he said.

Abdulla charged Pakistan with systematic and planned violation of the cease-fire agreement. Pakistan had strengthened the so-called "Azad" Kashmir battalions and helped to raise their number to forty. Even today her intentions towards Kashmir were patently hostile. She had sent her army officers to the northern frontiers of Kashmir to fortify those territories and this process of militarization had been going on in spite of her obligation to observe the conditions laid down by the cease-fire agreement.

Abdulla said that Kashmir was not an article of barter to be placed on the counter of the Security Council.

"It is foolish and unrealistic," he added, "to talk in terms of the Security Council deciding the fate of Kashmir. It has been fairly well established now that the Security Council has neither the initiative nor the power to decide any issue according to the canons of justice.

He continued that if Kashmir was handed over to Pakistan, it would be the very negation of democracy and justice besides being subversive of the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi.

There could be no longer any doubt about

Kashmir's position in India. The recent speech of President Rajendra Prasad and India's Republican Constitution itself made it clear that Kashmir had an honourable and a secure place in India.

On the other hand, Pakistan had not defined or declared her policy towards Kashmir. "We, the people of Kashmir," he concluded, "know that Pakistan wants Kashmir only to usurp and exploit Kashmir's wealth and beauty for her own selfish ends. This we shall never allow to happen."

III. SAVIOUR OF KASHMIR

Jawaharlal and Kashmir are synonymous. They are so interlinked with each other that no power on earth can separate them. The entire world, barring of course Pakistan, acknowledges Jawaharlal as the saviour of Kashmir. But for his timely help the whole valley would have been ruined by the raiders and invaders from Pakistan.

"Attempts are being made," declared Nehru at a press conference, "to bring pressure upon us, more especially in regard to Kashmir. I have never seen anything like it. That pressure has the effect of making it clear that these questions are not being considered on their merits but because of entirely different reasons."

Nehru added: "We shall consider every question, national or international, on its merits and if we are convinced about a single matter, we shall act accordingly and, if neces-

sary, revise our policy. But this method of international politics, of bringing pressure to bear for other reasons, is something which the Government of India have not learnt to understand yet.

“The people who run the Government of India have a record in the past of standing for what they consider to be right, regardless of the consequences, for the last thirty years and they propose to do that in regard to Kashmir or any other matter.”

He continued : “The Government of Pakistan and individuals and the press in Pakistan have been indulging in propaganda which has surprised me for its amazing falsehood. Sometimes there is an atom of truth in something but the way the Pakistan press and people in Pakistan have been carrying on propaganda about Kashmir is monstrous and scandalous in the extreme.

“Conditions inside Kashmir are referred to. If I have built up any reputation for the last thirty or forty years in my public life, I stake it and say that all that is said in Pakistan about Kashmir is a lie.”

Replying to a question about Security Council, Nehru said : “We went to the Security Council because if we had not gone, there would have been war between Pakistan and India. It is because we felt that every attempt should be made to avoid war that we went to the Security Council. It is always good to avoid war. Also, we raised a specific thing before the Security Council. We pointed out to the Security Council

that aggression had taken place by some people through Pakistan. We did not then—although we suspected it—accuse Pakistan of doing it themselves but rather of aiding and abetting others who passed through Pakistan territory, and we asked the Security Council to ask Pakistan not to aid and abet. That was our very simple demand.

“It is amazing how quickly people forget facts when the facts are inconvenient to them. Pakistan could not deny the fact that some people had gone across but they denied helping and aiding them in any way, much less sending their own troops. They went on denying that for many months. The odd thing is that a very simple question that was put by the Government of India to the Security Council has not yet been answered.

“We have had very complicated arguments and all kinds of commissions but that question remains unanswered. We want an answer to that question. We are not going to forget those days because once you start with wrong premises, once you do not understand how the conflict or difficulty has arisen, how are you to solve it? How are you to answer a question unless you face it? All the difficulty in the last two years has been due to this, but they have avoided framing the question, much less answering it.”

Answering another question, Nehru said :
“In the last two and a half years of conflict now, neither the Indian soldier nor anyone else has set foot on Pakistan soil. All the con-

flict has taken place on Kashmir soil. All the damage has taken place in Kashmir. Many towns and villages and areas in Kashmir have been despoiled and destroyed by Pakistan. I have never yet heard even a charge made of the Kashmiris themselves destroying part of their own territory.

"It is absurd on the face of it. Pakistanis have been coming to Kashmir aggressively, destroying towns and villages and looting and all that while nobody has been on their territory. And yet it is an astounding and amazing thing that they go on shouting as if they are the victims of others. We want this completely, absolutely, step by step, every single fact. Let the world judge about it."

The arrival of Sir Owen Dixon, the eminent Australian jurist, in the Indian sub-continent to settle the Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, gave a fresh ray of hope to those who desired a peaceful solution of the vexed problem. He arrived in New Delhi in midsummer of 1950, laden with the best blessings of the U.N.O. and the Anglo-American bloc. After hopping between New Delhi and Karachi, Sir Owen made a clear confession of his failure. He suggested a U.N.O. Administrator for plebiscite, a plan which India rejected as undemocratic and impossible. Then he suggested some principle for partition in areas where pro-Indian and pro-Pakistan people dominated and plebiscite for doubtful areas, but Pakistan rejected this plan. The only good that came out of his mission

was that he named Pakistan as the aggressor in Kashmir. Immediately after his report, the Pakistan press started a virulent propaganda against Jawaharlal as well as Sir Owen Dixon. War-fever spread over Pakistan.

"In regard to Kashmir," said Jawaharlal, "we will not go to war with Pakistan unless we are attacked first."

Chapter Eighteen

BAPU BIDS GOOD-BYE

The greatest tragedy ever enacted in India was the assassination of no less a personality than the Father of the Nation.

"It is a privilege to die at the hands of one's brother," said Mahatma Gandhi. And he actually fell victim to the bullets of Nathuram Vinayak Godse on January 30, 1948.

Gandhiji, the man of peace, the apostle of *ahimsa*, died by violence as a martyr in the struggle against fanaticism—that deadliest disease that threatened to jeopardise India's new-found freedom. He saw that this cancer must be rooted out before India could embark on the great task of nation-building.

"The light has gone out," said Jawaharlal.

His loss was personal as well as national because "Bapu" was not only the real commander of national forces in India but he was a guide and *guru* to Jawaharlal and he had declared time and again that Jawaharlal was his heir.

Jawaharlal was the saddest man in India because Mahatma Gandhi has been a father to him since the death of Motilal. Although Motilal was his real father, Jawaharlal since 1921 has been more under the influence of Gandhiji than Motilal. In all Congress movements and party differences Jawaharlal sided

with the Mahatma and not his own father. There were sharp differences between son and father. It was ultimately due to Gandhiji's influence that they all three united on a common platform in 1929 when complete independence was declared as India's ultimate goal.

I. NEHRU'S TRIBUTE TO MAHATMAJI

A moving tribute was paid by Jawaharlal to the sacred memory of Mahatma Gandhi in the Dominion Parliament. He said :

"We must try to be worthy of our teacher. It is the first duty of the Government to root out violence. So far as this Government is concerned, I trust they will spare no effort to do that because if we do not do that, if we, in our weakness or for any other reason that we may consider adequate, do not take effective means to stop this violence and this spreading of hatred by word of mouth or writing or act, then, indeed, we are not worthy of being in this Government, we are certainly not worthy of being his followers and we are not worthy of even saying words of praise for this great soul who has departed.

"In ages to come, centuries and, maybe, millennia after us, people will think of this generation when this man of God trod the earth and will think of us who, however small, also tread the holy ground where his foot had been. Let us be worthy of him.

"This tragedy is not merely the isolated

act of a mad man. It has come out of a certain atmosphere of violence and hatred that has prevailed in this country for many months and years, more especially the past few months. That atmosphere envelops us and surrounds us and if we are to serve the cause he put before us, we have to face this atmosphere, combat it, struggle against it, root out the evil of hatred and violence.

"It is customary in this House to pay some tribute to the eminent departed, to say some words of praise and condolence. I am not quite sure in my own mind if it is exactly fitting for me or any others in this House to say much on this occasion.

"For I have a sense of utter shame, both as an individual and as the Head of the Government of India, that we should have failed to protect the greatest treasure that we possessed. It is our failure, as it has been our failure in the past many months, to give protection to many an innocent man, woman and child. It may be that the burden and the task were too great for us or for any Government. Nevertheless, it is failure.

"The fact that this mighty person whom we honoured and loved beyond measure has gone because we could not give him adequate protection is shame for all of us. It is shame to me as an Indian that an Indian should have raised his hand against him; it is shame to me as a Hindu that a Hindu should have done this deed, and done it to the greatest Indian of the day and the

greatest Hindu of the age.

"We praise people in well-chosen words and we have some kind of a measure for greatness. How shall we praise him and how shall we measure him, because he was not of the common clay that all of us are made of. He came, lived a fairly long span of life and has passed away. No words of praise of ours in the House are needed, for he has had greater praise in his life than any living man in history, and during these two or three days since his death, he has had the homage of the world. What can we add to that ?

"How can we praise him, we who have been the children of his, and perhaps more intimately children of his than the children of his body, for we have all been in some greater or smaller measure the children of his spirit.

"The glory has departed and the sun that warmed and brightened our lives has set and we shiver in the cold and dark. Yet he would not have us feel this way. After all, the glory that we saw all these years, that man with the divine fire, changed us also, and such as we are, we have been moulded by him during these years and out of that divine fire many of us also took a small spark which strengthened us, made us work to some extent on the lines that he fashioned. And so, if we praise him, our words seem rather small, and if we praise him to some extent, we praise ourselves.

"Great men and eminent men have monuments in bronze and marble set up for them, but this man of divine fire managed in his

lifetime to become enmeshed with millions and millions of hearts so that all of us became somewhat of the stuff that he was made of, though in infinitely lesser degree. He spread out over India not in palaces or in selected places or in assemblies but in every hamlet and hut of the lowly and those who suffered.

"In a large measure, he made this country during these last thirty years and more, and attained to heights of sacrifice which in that particular domain have never been equalled elsewhere. He succeeded in that. Yet ultimately, things happened which, no doubt, made him suffer tremendously.

"Though his tender face never lost its smile and he never spoke a harsh word to any one, yet he must have suffered for the failings of this generation whom he had trained, suffered because we went away from the path that he had shown us and, ultimately, the hand of a child of his—for he after all is as much a child of his as any other Indian—struck him down.

"Long ages afterwards history will judge of this period we have passed through. It will judge of the successes and the failures. We are too near it to be proper judges and to understand what has happened and what has not happened. All we know is that there was a glory and it is no more. All we know is that for the moment there is darkness, not so dark certainly because when we look into our hearts we still find the living flame which he lighted, and if this

living flame exists there will not be darkness in this land and we shall be able with our effort, remembering him and following his path, to illumine this land again, small as we are but still with the fire that he kindled into us.

“He was perhaps the greatest symbol of the India of the past, and may I say of the India of the future that we could have had. We stand on this perilous edge of the present, between that past and the future to be, and we face all manner of perils, and the greatest peril is sometimes the lack of faith which comes to us, the sense of frustration that comes to us, the sinking of the heart and of the spirit that comes to us when we see ideals becoming unreal and we see the great things that we talked about somehow becoming empty words, and life taking a different course.

“Yet I do believe that perhaps this period will pass soon enough. Great as this man of God was in his life, he had been greater in his death and I have not the shadow of doubt that by his death he has served the great cause as he served it throughout his life.

“We shall always mourn him because we are human and cannot forget our beloved master, but I know that he would not like us to mourn him. No tears came to his eyes when his dearest and closest went away, only a firm resolve to persevere to serve the great cause that he had chosen. So, he

would chide us if we merely mourned.

“That is a poor way of paying homage to him. The only way is to express our determination to pledge ourselves anew, to dedicate ourselves to the great tasks which he undertook and he accomplished to such a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice and thus, to some extent at least, prove worthy followers of his.”

Chapter Nineteen

POLICE ACTION IN HYDERABAD

Police action in Hyderabad will always be looked upon as a glorious chapter in the regime of Premier Jawaharlal Nehru.

Hyderabad has long been a hotbed of reactionary intrigues and the police action was an operation upon a chronic ulcer in the stomach of India.

On September 18, 1948, greeting the people on the successful completion of this historic action, Nehru said :

“ To the people of Hyderabad both Moslem and non-Moslem I should like to send my greetings. It has been a sorrow to us that there should have been armed conflict among the people of this country. Happily that is over. An evil course was followed by the ruling clique in Hyderabad and that led to this unfortunate conflict. I am glad that His Exalted Highness the Nizam realised that he had acted wrongly and had been misled and that he wisely retraced his steps. He is to be congratulated for acting rightly even at this late hour. Much misery and complication of issues might have been avoided if this right action had been taken a little earlier.

“ But I do not wish to speak of the past now and I do not wish any one to harbour

ill-will any more. We have stated clearly that the future of Hyderabad will be determined in accordance with the wishes of her people. We shall stand by that declaration. That future, I am convinced, lies in the closest association with India. History, geography and cultural traditions bear witness to the fact."

Chapter Twenty

ROAD TO UNIVERSAL PEACE

When Jawaharlal visited London in October, 1948, to attend the Dominion Premiers' Conference, he was given a rousing reception by the United Nations Assembly, then holding its session at Paris on November 3, 1948.

He was the first head of a member state ever to address the U.N.O. and the honour done to Premier Nehru by the world body was amply justified by the fact that he has been the greatest champion of peace and peaceful methods in India, Asia and the world.

While addressing United Nations Assembly at Paris, Jawaharlal laid down the principles which must be followed in order to achieve universal peace :

"I come from a country which, after a long struggle, though that struggle was a peaceful struggle, attained her freedom and her independence. In these long years of struggle we were taught by our great leader never to forget not only the objectives we had but also the methods whereby we should achieve those objectives. Always he laid stress on this, that it was not good enough to have a good objective, that it was equally important that the means of attaining those objectives were good ; means were always as important as

ends. You will permit me to repeat that here, because I am convinced that, however good the ends, the larger ends of United Nations, or the lesser objectives which we may from time to time have before us, either as individual nations or as a group of nations, it is important that we should remember that the best of objectives may not be reached if our eyes are bloodshot and our minds clouded with passion.

"Therefore, it becomes essential for us, for "a while, to think more of how we are doing things than what we are aiming at, even though we should never forget what we are aiming at."

Jawaharlal made the following statement on India's policy for universal peace on March 8, 1949:

"Our foreign policy is one to keep apart from big blocs of Nations—rival blocs—and to be friendly to all countries and not become entangled in any alliances, military or otherwise, that might drag us into any possible conflict.

"Our main stake in world affairs is peace, to see that there is racial equality and that people who are still subjugated should be free."

Chapter Twenty-one

DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

It was in the month of October, 1949, that the brightest star of the East rose over the New World and became a beacon that will shine for ever.

Personally greeted by him at the Washington Airport, the Prime Minister of India was the state guest of President Truman. Wherever he went in the U.S.A. he was accorded the warmest welcome ever witnessed. The American hospitality, he enjoyed, is probably unmatched in the history of the world. It was, of course, a tribute to a personality whose reputation for suavity, culture and refinement of mind was something rather special in the world inhabited by today's great national leaders.

I. AMERICAN JUGGLERY AT ITS BEST

Evidently America was out to make a good impression. Congressmen polished up their best oratory and one of them even murmured poetic phrases from Tennyson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Officials of the State Department acted as though they were walking on eggs and did considerable worrying lest Nehru's hosts attempt to match his cultivated Cambridge accent instead of relaxing and acting like plain homespun Americans. Nehru, they had heard, disliked Americans who aped the British.

Nehru made speeches before both houses of Congress, visited the Library of Congress and the National Gallery of Art, where he admired a Botticelli and a Murillo, inspected the State Department and went to a National Press Club dinner.

Within a few days the ice was broken. The slight, gray, bald-headed but young-looking leader of three hundred and thirty-seven million people allowed unmistakable gleams of pleasure to break through his scholarly reserve. He moved on to New York, where he climbed the Empire State Building, got an honorary degree from Columbia University, attended dinners with industrialists and literary teas, and spent a considerable amount of his time somewhat anxiously roaring around in the wake of a huge escort of Mayor O'Dwyer's motorcycle corps.

No matter how hectic the pressure of official and unofficial ceremonies and dinners became, it was evident that the little Pandit could take it and that he was determined to learn as much about America and about as many kinds of Americans as he could possibly cram into his month-long schedule. He talked to the Chase National Bank's Winthrop Aldrich and to Negro Contralto Marian Anderson. He spent half an evening with Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers who had come from Detroit to see him. He shook hands with Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and discussed show business with Oscar Hammerstein II, who offered him the remarkable honour of some tickets to *South Pacific*. Occasionally his face lighted

up with well-bred astonishment. "I was told," he remarked quizzically to a companion, "that American business men were hard-headed. I find some of them quite sentimental." Now and then Nehru's own strain of Oriental sentimentality came to the surface in a way Americans do not ordinarily associate with politicians. "I look into the eyes of the people," he said with characteristic candour, "and I see kindness everywhere." Before Nehru left New York for Boston, Canada and the Pacific Coast, he confessed to only one dissatisfaction, and that was over the fact that there were still varieties of Americans he had not yet seen and talked to. He regretted that his programme did not permit him to see and meet common folk such as those on farms.

While Nehru was busy trying to fathom the contours of the American psyche, many American policy-makers and plain citizens were trying to fathom Nehru. That he was one of the most likable foreign emissaries who had ever visited that country was obvious. But behind the ingratiating spectacle of his visit there lay certain cold economic and political questions whose answers might prove very important to the immediate future of the world. Nehru, though he hardly mentioned such things, was presumably interested in certain items with which a friendly America could help the development of his newly independent India—notably wheat, machinery, private capital and industrial know-how.

Despite State Department silence, America was quite openly interested in getting a friendly India on its side in the cold war with Communist Russia. The reasons for this interest were evident enough. The general breakdown of American policy in China had made it imperative that the Americans take a stand somewhere else in Asia to help stem the advance of world communism. The geographical position of India, lying squarely across the feasible air routes between Europe and South-East Asia, combined with its enormous population, its area and its comparative political stability to make it a powerful and valuable Asiatic friend. Nehru himself, though he had once had strong Marxist sympathies and was still inclined toward socialism, had shown by his stiff treatment of India's own communist party that he was stubbornly opposed to any meddling by the Kremlin in the internal affairs of his country.

II. COMMUNISM VERSUS AMERICANISM

Nehru's polite and charming answers, which appeared in many speeches and private conversations, had a way of challenging the conventional ideas of his interlocutors while leaving them somewhat in the dark about what he was actually prepared to do. It was difficult to pin him down on specific points. But his general attitude was expressed roughly as follows: Nehru deplored the cold war, which he attributed to a growing "fear complex" which he thought might easily plunge

the world into a genuine war. He deplored the present "colossal expenditure of energy and resources on armaments". He agreed quite frankly that international communism was an unscrupulous movement whose leaders could not be trusted. He even agreed that communism and capitalism could not long survive together in the same world ; but he took what seemed a remarkably detached view of the present East-West conflict, indicating that he believed the long-term winner would be "the society which delivers the goods materially and spiritually". As the foreign minister as well as the prime minister of India, he pointed out that Asia's problems had no comparison with those of Europe and America.

The strength of the communist appeal in Asia, he said, was part of the fervent desire for national independence in peoples who were sick and tired of being dominated by European imperial powers. His thesis was that once the remaining vestiges of imperial domination in Asia were removed, there would be a chance for orderly progress—and when that came the machinery of communist organization would wither from disuse. "When man's liberty or peace is in danger," he stated, "we cannot and shall not be neutral." But evidently he did not regard Asiatic communism, at the present moment at least, as any overwhelming threat to man's liberty. The communist triumph in China he considers a *fait accompli* and basically more of an agrarian revolt than a Moscow plot. That line

of thinking, which may be motivated in part by Nehru's awareness of India's own vast agrarian problem, has caused him to recognise the new Chinese Communist Government set up in Peiping.

Chapter Twenty-two

ROUND TABLE OF THE AIR

On October 31, 1949, Jawaharlal said in a nationwide broadcast of the University of Chicago Round Table of the Air that some form of world federation of nations was needed to eliminate the possibility of war, and added that India hoped to help promote such an organization.

Professor Redfield of the University of Chicago asked Nehru's opinion of the Marshall Plan.

Nehru said : " I think the Marshall Plan certainly helped certain countries in Europe greatly, and also helped them to help themselves which is important. President Truman's Point-Four Programme also seems to me a very good method of approaching this problem to the extent of giving technical help to under-developed countries."

Professor Redfield asked about Nehru's statement that " there really seems no alternative between world conquest and world association."

Nehru, replying, said : " Unless there is full co-operation between various parts of the world, there is likely to be conflict. In that sense it is difficult to avoid one of the two extreme things. Of course, the process of full co-operation may not be a very quick one, yet

events are moving so rapidly that it becomes more and more necessary for world co-operation to develop. What form it may take, it is a little difficult to say. Obviously it cannot ignore the freedom of nations. It means ultimately certain forms of sovereignty might be given over to some central authority—a world authority. But domestically every country will be completely independent to follow any policy it chooses.”

I. FEDERAL ASSOCIATION

Professor Redfield said this suggested some federal association in which nations would preserve their entities.

Nehru replied: “Yes, if you like you can call it federal though to begin with the authority of that federal structure must be very limited. Gradually, as people get used to it, it might increase.”

Replying to a question by Professor Redfield about the Asian Association of Nations, Nehru said: “Development in Asia has not proceeded very far, not as far as in Europe for instance. It is more on a mental plane, if I may say so, than on a practical plane. But, I think it is very likely that regional associations might grow up. But Asia perhaps is too big an area for regional associations. It is much too big. South-East Asia is a good area. Again there may be some kind of closer association between all these regional areas.”

II. INDIA'S FUTURE ROLE

Professor Redfield asked about India's future role in world affairs.

Nehru replied: "Well, the future role, I hope, would be to promote world co-operation."

Professor Redfield then asked if India could become the leader or the headquarters of such an effort.

Nehru in reply said: "I do not like the idea of India or any country becoming the leader in any such effort, because thinking in that way brings difficulties and people react wrongly to it. But to say that India should work to its utmost capacity to that end, I can understand. India has certain advantages in that she has no burdens from the past to carry. We have no enmities, no complications as other countries have, because of past history. Therefore, India in a sense is situated somewhat better to help in that process—but help in co-operation with others with no claims to leadership."

Nehru also spoke of the poverty of the East, and its necessity to acquire essentials of life.

Replying to Professor Redfield's question if there was not a paradox in the East being far behind the West in material values, but ahead in "human" values, Nehru said: "Now that is perfectly true that there is still, I think, a strong relation between them in India, and I think there is in the West too about them. Also it is true that while material prosperity is necessary in India, the

same value is not attached to it perhaps as in some other parts of the earth's surface. A man like Mahatma Gandhi—a man without possessions, title and authority, that is, any Governmental authority or anything—can become a supreme leader in India alone.”

Chapter Twenty-three

COLOMBO CONFERENCE

"We have watched with pride the evolution of your personality, always synonymous with self-sacrifice and patriotism, into a world figure."

This is a tribute paid to Jawaharlal Nehru by Sir Ernest de Silva, chairman of the All-Party Committee in Colombo which sponsored the reception. The address referred to the historic link between India and Ceylon, particularly Buddhism. It particularly mentioned the symbol of Free India:

"We are happy that Asoka *chakra* as representing the ever-moving wheel of *dharma* has been adopted by your Government as the national emblem of India and the guiding principle of your country."

I. THE DOMINANT FIGURE

There is little doubt that Jawaharlal was the dominant figure at the Commonwealth Ministers' Conference. Apart from his universal popularity, Jawaharlal took a leading part at the conference table. He created a profound impression on the delegations of all countries. One of the senior delegates from Canada said:

"We are all proud of Nehru."
In his white *achkan* and Gandhi cap, Nehru

attracted the Colombo crowds like magnet.

"I am grateful for such affection" were Nehru's words when he was overwhelmed by the kindness that was showered on him by the Ceylonese.

In the picturesque palm-studded capital of the Emerald Isle, the East and the West met in an atmosphere of impeccable cordiality and evolved a pattern of goodwill and cordiality between the world family of nations. The leading statesmen represented eight Commonwealth countries and five continents. They pledged themselves to international peace and welfare of humanity.

Behind the main table sat D. S. Senanyake, Ceylon's Prime Minister, who was elected as the chairman of the conference. To the right sat Jawaharlal Nehru flanked by V. K. Krishna Menon and V. V. Giri. Ernest Bevin and Noel-Baker sat on the left. Ghulam Mohammed, the Pakistani leader, faced the chairman at the far end of the table. Lester B. Pearson, the Canadian delegate, and his companions sat between the Indians and the Pakistanis. Australian leader, P. C. Spender, sat next to the Britons and the African leader, Paul Sauer, next to the Australians.

Nehru summed up the conference thus :

"It has certainly been worthwhile.

"To speak much about it is wrong.

"To belittle it is also wrong."

More than one delegate said that history would record the achievements of the

conference.

Jawaharlal, as usual, caused the Security Police a considerable headache. Once he started off on his own to visit an old friend at 5 a.m. Again he wandered into a bookshop to buy a book. His choice was *I Choose Peace* by Konni Zilliacus, British member of Parliament expelled from the Labour Party last year, who has now lost his seat in the general elections.

The six-day secret meeting of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference ended at 12-15 p.m. (Ceylon Time) on January 14, 1950, in a blaze of eloquent speeches by leaders of eight Commonwealth delegations.

Nehru was the first speaker. He regarded the conference remarkable and significant. He said :

"We are evolving something that is important, something that is new, a kind of invisible link that is more endurable than a visible binding link. Under a visible link one always feels its pressure, but not so with the invisible link."

The social amity of Jawaharlal and Ghulam Mohammed surprised many observers. They came out arm in arm when the first session of the conference ended. Pakistan Minister was asked if it signified anything special. He stated that it signified a friendship of twenty years.

II. INDIANS IN CEYLON

Nehru did not discuss the thorny problem of Indians' troubles in Ceylon. He meticulously

avoided it. He stated the Indian workers in Ceylon had come many years ago to labour and develop the plantations. He said :

" Their future seems to be a little doubtful. I hope these people who have done so much for the development of this country will be given as much consideration as possible."

It was a simple but impressive ceremony that Nehru, Bevin, Noel-Baker and Lester Pearson were awarded honorary degrees by the Ceylon University.

David Low, the world-famous cartoonist of the London *Evening Standard*, depicted the Commonwealth leaders at Colombo dancing out of step on a line marked " Recognition of Communist China ". Rahimtoola, Bevin and Nehru were shown as toeing the line with their left foot in the right foreground of the cartoon entitled, " A Little Difference in Timing ". The representatives of New Zealand, U.S.A., Australia and Canada have their arms linked with the rest but hold their raised left feet away from the line. " Britannia " is shown playing a music score called " South-East Asia Policy " on a grand piano in the background.

Chapter Twenty-four

THE REPUBLIC DAY

Jawaharlal is not merely a dreamer of dreams but also a builder and an architect of history. From the first Independence Day to the first Republic Day the personality of Jawaharlal sweeps itself across all the golden pages of India's titanic struggle for independence. In 1930 he was the President of the Indian National Congress. In 1950 he is the Prime Minister of the Independent Sovereign Republic of India. Consequently the Republic Day celebrations were more than anything else the celebrations of Jawaharlal's own dream-architecture.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new" is an old but a correct human saying. So the Republic Day celebrations started with a farewell to C. Rajagopalachari and a welcome to Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Indian Republic.

Nehru paid a handsome tribute to the retiring Governor-General, C. Rajagopalachari, at a banquet given in his honour on the eve of the Republic Day. The Prime Minister called him the old guard of the National Movement and referred to their thirty years' close and intimate association in a common cause.

"I am quite sure," said Nehru, "that when necessity demands it and necessity demands

it all the time, if I may say so—not only our affection but the need of the country will call you to other services for the country you have lived in and served for so long. So, with this feeling and with the conviction that you are there and that you will come back whenever you are needed, my mind is softened a little and I do not feel what otherwise I might have felt at your going away.”

The Governor-General was equally fervent in his admiration of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet

“Let me testify publicly,” said Rajagopalachari, “on this occasion that he (Nehru) has grown and is growing every day even now and he is more competent to take the message of Mahatma Gandhi to the world and keep it going today than he ever was. And I have no doubt in my mind that if that lamp is kept by our people, they can get all the magic out of that lamp. I hope they would not fall a prey to the temptation of selling the old lamp away and buying new ones.”

In a stirring Republic Day message to the nation Nehru emphasized the basic factors upon which Gandhiji laid stress and on which the progress of a nation depends—high character, integrity of mind and purpose, a spirit of tolerance and co-operation and hard work.

“I can only suggest to our people,” he said, “that we should found our republican freedom on these basic characteristics and shed fear and hatred from our minds and think

always of the betterment of the millions of our people."

Rajendra Prasad, the President-elect, reached the Government House at 10 a.m. to take the oath of office. Scene in the Durbar Hall was reminiscent of the days when the Viceroy took the oath of office. But there was a difference. Half the Durbar Hall was covered by white Gandhi caps worn by most of the M.P.'s who had gathered to witness the ceremony of installation of one whom they had unanimously elected as the President.

While the audience were waiting for the President's arrival, Nehru was busy in welcoming guests and talking to a diplomat here, an official or a lady there.

Jawaharlal was moving about like one who cannot sit still at such an hour and who is conscious of his own responsibility for all that was happening around him.

After taking his seat for a brief moment on the throne, Rajaji read out the proclamation in clear and distinct tones. He then asked the President-elect to move over to the throne. When Rajendra Prasad took his seat, Rajagopalachari patted him on the shoulder and gave him his blessings.

Chief Justice Kania administered the oath to the President. Rajendra Prasad took the oath of office in Hindi. Then he delivered a brief speech pledging himself to the service of the nation.

The Presidential Procession left the Government House at 2-30 p.m. Two million people

cheered the President on the five-mile long route.

About twenty thousand people watched the military parade at the Irwin Stadium. It was a perfect formation, a smart turnout and a colourful scene—It was a memorable scene when the President took the salute.

All important buildings were floodlit at night and both the cities Old Delhi and New Delhi—presented a fairyland appearance.

India's Republic Day was celebrated all over the world and messages received from the heads of states were personally and individually replied by Nehru.

Chapter Twenty-five

NEHRU THROUGH FIFTY

Nineteen hundred and fifty was the most eventful year in the life of Jawaharlal. He dominated the political scene in the country and none dared to challenge his leadership. Even the rise of Purushottamdas Tandon as a rival of Jawaharlal's political ideologies and aspirations turned out to be a sheepish affair. Jawaharlal openly opposed Tandon as Gandhiji had opposed Bose, but Nehru-Tandon differences ended in a timid compromise rather than in an ideological conflict of Gandhi-Bose type. Tandon lacks the guts of Bose as much as Nehru lacks the political drive of Gandhiji. Those who expected Nasik to be another Haripur realised that they were wrong in their conjectures.

I. DICTATORIAL STATESMANSHIP

Holding as he does all the political authority of India in his two hands and being wholly and solely responsible for all the national and international policies of our Republic, Jawaharlal rightly resented the charge made in certain U.S. papers that India's foreign policy was dictated by domestic reasons. At a press conference in New Delhi on October 16, 1950, he reiterated with complete vehemence that no internal question or difficulty or suggestion or

hint had come in the way of our fashioning our foreign policy.

India's home and foreign policy is being moulded by the highest moral sense of Jawaharlal. He does what he thinks to be right according to his own conscience. There are no political pebbles in his path or spokes in his wheel. In answer to a correspondent who referred to uninformed criticism in foreign papers, Premier Nehru said with a touch of bitterness, "People tend to think of domestic policies of other countries in terms of their own."

II. NEHRU-LIAQUAT PACT

Nehru-Liaquat Pact was a triumph of Jawaharlal Nehru, achieved in the very teeth of public opposition. Had he been governed by public opinion in India, as the Americans think, there would have been no Nehru-Liaquat Pact. The majority of people in India wanted to take strong measures against Pakistan while Nehru adopted the policy of appeasement. Liaquat Ali rushed to Delhi, early in the year when the Moslems from U.P., Liaquat Ali's own province, migrated to Pakistan in large numbers as a counterblast to the removal of millions of Hindus from East Pakistan. Nehru convinced Liaquat Ali of the disastrous anti-Hindu policy followed by his government. Even though the Pakistan Premier could sacrifice the Punjabi and Delhi Moslems, he had to listen to the voice of sanity from U.P. Moslems, because blood is thicker than water

even in politics. It was, however, Jawaharlal who pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for Premier Liaquat Ali by signing the pact.

Historians alone will rightly adjudge the pact which, however, did not deter the Pakistan Premier from carrying on a scathing anti-Indian propaganda during his visit to America before even the ink of the pact was dry. The general public opinion in India has been against the pact. Prominent ministers, notably Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, Mr. K. C. Neogy and Dr. John Matthai, resigned the cabinet on the Indo-Pakistan issue. Dr. John Matthai had also other reasons to differ with his chief, particularly financial extravagance of the Nehru Government especially in departments directly controlled by the Premier himself.

III. PREMIER AND PEOPLE

The majority of the people of India have not been very happy over the policies pursued by Jawaharlal, particularly with reference to Pakistan. He has received hammering blows in the anti-Congress press even though the Congress press has not been very sympathetic towards him. The *Organiser*, the R.S.S. organ, painted Nehru comically and ironically in its issue dated October 2, 1950: "A brave new definition of democracy from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is the rule of obedient people by arrogant leaders according to imposed opinions When he opposes partition he is democratic. When he advocates partition even then he is a democrat. Whether he withholds

rupees fifty crores or releases them, he is throughout a democrat When the Congress disagrees it is reactionary. When the country protests it is communal. Secularism is the Allah ; Panditji is the Prophet and his utterances are the revealed writ of holy Koran. Whoever dare disagree with his dictation are kafirs, they are communal, reactionary. . . We must tell Panditji that such utterances are gross blasphemy ; they are a challenge to the democratic traditions of this nation. Their utterer could not be a true prophet. His Allah is a fraud and a hoax . . . These utterances are worthy of a Nero, not of the Nehru who is dearer to our hearts. . . Let Panditji redress the Bengal wrong. . . Only let him do it. Let him not philosophize ; let him not fiddle. For our Bengal is fast burning."

Pandit Nehru, who has to bear the brunt of a burning bitterness, cannot be a happy man. Before independence he lived by popularity. Today he lives by his courage of conviction.

IV. WAR IN KOREA

Pandit Nehru followed a courageous policy during the war in Korea. His policy was that of a bold neutrality. While he did not approve of the invasion of South Korea by the North Koreans, he also did not approve of the invasion of North Korea by the South Koreans, U.S.A. and U.N. forces. If Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to win the goodwill of both America and Russia in his South Korean policy, he has failed in his purpose.

If Jawaharlal, however, has followed his own conscience without trying to win goodwill of everybody, he must be congratulated on his courage of conviction though in that case we might expect some trouble in international politics and India might become a hotbed of Russo-American rivalries, just as Iran has always been, but brave men are not afraid of trouble.

"The crisis of the world," said Jawaharlal, "requires every country to search its conscience and seek ways of action which lead to the peace which we all desire. We cannot sacrifice tomorrow because of the passions of today."

Jawaharlal has opposed the creation of a U.N. armed force for being stationed in other countries. He said forcefully, "We object to any bit of our army in our country to be under the control of an outside body. We have no desire to function as policemen of the world."

V. NO-WAR PACT

Jawaharlal's "no-war" pact for Indo-Pakistan relations has been much in the limelight throughout the year. He has suggested a joint tribunal to the Pakistan Premier and described it as "eminently practical and reasonable".

"I do not know of any instance," he said, "where two independent nations have gone further in devising some method for settling their disputes."

Jawaharlal's "no-war declaration" for Indo-Pakistan relations condemns resort to war for the settlement of any existing or future disputes between them. It suggests recognised peaceful methods for disputes, such as negotiation, mediation or arbitration.

A considerable correspondence has taken place between the two Governments on the subject. Pakistan's view-point has been that such a declaration is too vague and that the two Governments should lay down a specified procedure, with a time-table, for the settlement of every existing or future dispute. Jawaharlal has pointed out that it is difficult to have the same procedure for all the disputes of entirely different kinds, some of which may be justiciable, some not. Also that rigid time-table would defeat its own purpose.

"At the present moment," said Jawaharlal. "there are four major disputes between India and Pakistan—Kashmir, evacuee property, canal waters and the question of the exchange ratio. Kashmir cannot be dealt with by this (Indo-Pakistan) tribunal and Security Council is at present seized of it. The question of the exchange ratio is in the hands of the International Monetary Fund and we hope that they will soon arrive at a decision. We have already offered to refer the two other matters, namely evacuee property and canal waters, to a joint tribunal. This also covers future disputes of a like nature."

Chapter Twenty-six

HAIL NEHRU !

Jawaharlal Nehru has been hailed the world over as a man of destiny and as an architect of human civilization.

The fact that Nehru celebrated his sixtieth birthday on 14th November, 1949, inspired the *Manchester Guardian* to take stock of the way in which years have dealt with the Indian leader.

Speaking as one who met him on his present visit for the first time since 1939, the paper's London editor says : " Pandit Nehru fits well into a statesman's mould except that he still talks with more eagerness, vivacity—and distinction—than do most of those who carry the responsibilities of a state.

" Nor have the long years of struggle and confinement and the enormous strains of office diminished his sense of humour. It is most delightful when it is a little sly or self-depreciatory and spoken softly with a lilt that might have been acquired in no more distant a place than Wales."

I. WORLD NEEDS NEHRU'S VOICE

International leadership of Nehru has been acknowledged long before India's independence. On June 15, 1946, a demand that Jawaharlal Nehru should represent India at

the next session of the United Nations Organisation was made in an editorial of the *New Leader*, the weekly organ of the Independent Labour Party.

"The world needs Nehru's voice," said the editor.

II. PRINCE AMONG MEN

The Nagpur University confirmed on Nehru the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws on 1st January, 1950.

Stating the "worthiness" of Nehru for the degree, the Vice-Chancellor, Kunjilal Dubey, said : "Nagpur University has today the unique privilege of conferring an honorary degree on one whose presence does honour to any assembly of men in the world.

"A man of peace, whom necessities of the age moulded into a hero of the Gandhian revolution, a leader of his nation both in the destruction of its bondage and in the construction of its freedom, a warrior whose battles have—both then and now—been imbued with the spirit of non-violence, a statesman whose love of his country is without bounds and yet whose global vision is the admiration of the councils of the world, a man of deeds as well as a man of letters, a man of science too whose sixty years of life have been a life of prayer in action, a man among princes and a prince among men, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is among the greatest gifts of Providence to modern India.

"An heir to all that is noble and great in

the East, he has drunk freely of the culture of the West. Virtually at home in all lands, truly citizen of the world, he embodies in himself universal virtues, moral and intellectual. Pandit Nehru is a jewel."

III. CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

H. N. Brailsford wrote :

"We, of the West, are apt to think of Pandit Nehru as a citizen of the world, which he, certainly, is. He is for us, first of all, our socialist comrade, and we recall with sympathy and admiration his wide culture, his training in the sciences, his love of English poetry and his familiarity with history, which is for him the vivid background and framework of the struggle to which he has given his life. But with all his Western culture, he has remained an Indian who feels instinctively one with the masses of peasants and workers around him. Open-minded and sympathetic, he is always accessible and converses easily. There is no rigidity here and no sense of frustration. Not even his long years of imprisonment have embittered him, and what impressed me most during a memorable stay with him was the serenity with which he faces the tangled crisis of today and the perplexities of tomorrow."

IV. MAN OF GREATER MOBILITY

Harold Laski, foremost socialist thinker and economist, gave the following message to the *United Press of India* on the occasion of the fifty-fifth birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru : "I

should like through you to send my warm good wishes to Pandit Jawaharlal on his fifty-fifth birthday. I know no figure in contemporary politics of greater mobility than he."

V. MAN GREATLY BELOVED

Edward Thompson in his message said : 'It is very hard to know what to say about my dear friend Pandit Jawaharlal. As my message I send you, Pandit Jawaharlal, the assurance given to the Hebrew Prophet 'Man greatly beloved fear not: Peace be unto: Be strong: yes, be strong. Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shall rest in thy lot at end of days'."

VI. THE UNCOMPROMISING DEMOCRAT

Ethel Mannin, famous authoress and champion of India's freedom, said : "I am delighted to send my message for Nehru whom I greatly honour. It is a custom in this country to send people in their birthday greetings 'many happy returns'. I would like to send Jawaharlal this year a slightly amended version of 'many happier returns', as many of them he feels to make for a rich and useful living. That I have utmost admiration for his uncompromising stand you must know, and that I am completely with him in things for which he stands which is not merely a free independent India but for issues which go beyond nationalism—a dream of and struggle for a free socialist world in which the brotherhood of men, independent of race or colour or

creed is a reality. Greetings from my heart to you, Jawaharlal personally and things for which you stand."

VII. MAN OF CONSTRUCTIVE VISION

Fenner Brockway, Secretary of the Independent Labour Party, London, in course of a lengthy message to the *United Press of India*, said :

"There is no man in the British Cabinet who has knowledge of the mankind through ages and in the present period such as Pandit Jawaharlal possesses. There is no man who has so deeply studied all social and political systems in Russia, Britain, America, Germany, as Pandit Jawaharlal has done. There is no man who has his bold constructive vision. There is no man who has his strength of character and resolution to face all sacrifices for his ideals. India has reason to be proud of Pandit Jawaharlal."

VIII. NEHRU AND CHURCHILL

Louis Fischer has made an interesting study of Jawaharlal and Winston Churchill in which he says :

"Nehru demonstrates his superiority over Churchill. The former Prime Minister also feels that a constantly expanding Russia is menace to peace and freedom-loving countries. But what does he propose? An Anglo-American military alliance is tantamount to an American guarantee of the British colonial empire. This nineteenth-century solution is

out of date, ineffective and disastrous. Churchill is always a super-nationalist and imperialist. Nehru is an internationalist. Churchill helped to make the atomic bomb. But he misses its significance. Nehru uses the language of the atomic age. Churchill urges a dual *entente*, Nehru advocates a 'world order'.

"Since Russia threatens, Churchill and, with him, some short-sighted Americans, reason—hold on more tightly to the British Empire. Since Russia threatens, Nehru replies, give freedom to India, Indonesia, Indo-China, Egypt, Syria, the Lebanon, etc.

"A free India would resist Russian encroachment as dangerous to its freedom. An enslaved, unhappy and disaffected India, Egypt and Java might court Russia."

IX. WORLD'S GREATEST MAN

Fenner Brockway has paid the following tribute to Nehru as the first Prime Minister of India.

"So Jawaharlal is Prime Minister of India. The significance of this tremendous change is difficult to grasp. Since a young man he has always been on the edge of a prison door—either to enter or to depart. Only four years ago he was regarded as such a dangerous political character by the British that he was arrested, held in secret and without any prospect of release. Now the British Viceroy has invited him to form a government. One's first thought is to congratulate Jawaharlal personally. When during his imprisonment

after 1942 I sometimes said that I hoped to live to see him President of the United Socialist States of India, both my English and Indian friends would smile, regarding me as an incurable optimist. He has taken the first step towards that position, and I believe he will still reach it. I think we are always apt to exaggerate the importance of individuals compared with the movements which they reflect, but nevertheless I regard Jawaharlal as one of the greatest men, if not the greatest in the world today. India is fortunate to have him.

“It was good to hear Jawaharlal’s announcement of the intention to call a conference in New Delhi of the representatives of all the Asiatic Nations. This opens up great possibilities. India can become the leader of the whole continent, not only helping the other peoples of Asia to win their political freedom but planning with them their social and economic development and their anticipation from servitude. In reporting this development, the British broadcasts added in a rather sinister tone that the ‘Asiatic Nations’ would probably include Japan. I hope they will. If India can encourage a democratic Japan to collaborate for the good of the whole of Asia, a great contribution will have been made towards the future peace of the world. In Europe we appear to be going down to more intense divisions and conflicts, burying the hope of any early political or economic unity and advance. In Asia, India has now the opportunity not only to realise its own freedom

and unity, but to be the instrument for the achievement of freedom and unity for a whole continent. It is a great destiny."

X. MAN OF FEARLESS COURAGE

Here is another tribute to Nehru from Norman Cliff, New Delhi correspondent of the *News Chronicle*, London :

"As a statesman, Pandit Nehru stands head and shoulders above his colleagues. With a Harrow and Cambridge background, he appreciates the Western approach and knows the value of give and take. Therefore, with him understanding is possible. Although blunt and uncompromising in speech, he responds readily to straight dealing.

"The miracle of the man is that despite what he has endured at British hands, not a sign of bitterness remains on his features or in his attitude. He has been the guest of British prison authorities in India on nine occasions.

"Above everything, Pandit Nehru is a man of fearless courage as I can testify after being at his side when he was faced with hostile tribesmen on the Frontier and infuriated Bihar Hindus whom he ordered to cease brutal retaliation against Moslem neighbours.

"Next to India's independence, scientific research and wise, visioned planning are his dearest enthusiasms, but the sad lot of the exploited common man moves him most of all. Not for nothing, is he the darling of the India masses."

XI. FOUNDING FATHER OF INDIA

An editorial in the *Washington Post* said, "Nehru is the founding father of his country, second only to Gandhi in the people's veneration. The unique leadership exercised by Nehru is at once hierarchic and democratic."

The editorial added, "We want to know him and we want him to know us, partly because he has a contribution to make to world pacification. It would be the part of wisdom to listen to what he has to say on how to deal with Asia."

"Nehru is the most distinguished statesman in Asia and his visit to the United States is a matter of high consequence," said the *New York Herald Tribune* in an editorial.

"Because of Pandit Nehru's efforts and those of his Indian associates, India has now more stability than any other nation in the Orient," the editorial added.

"India has grave problems but the country has leaders of great capacity."

"If these leaders can carry out their plans for India their nation might become one of the most powerful countries in the world."

Outlining India's reasons for wishing to avoid alliance with either the Soviet Union or the Western Powers the editorial said: "Various factors, however, have tended to swing India toward closer relations with the U.S.A. and Britain."

"The trend toward close relations between India and the West is likely to continue and can be encouraged if Americans are careful to deal

with Indians as a proud people, with a notable cultural history, who have shown great political capacity in the early days of their new Republic.

"Success in negotiating with Indians also will depend in part on full recognition of both the present and the potential strength of the nation Pandit Nehru leads. There is no doubt that India should be dealt with as a major Power," the editorial concluded.

"Americans ought to find out what Nehru is here for before they break into unrestrained cheers," said the *New York Daily News* in a leading article.

The paper added : "If it is just a social visit, fine. If it's anything more, the American taxpayer ought to know the details now, instead of after some deal involving a lot of his money has been cooked up."

"The arrival of Pandit Nehru in Washington symbolizes the fulfilment of a vision that preoccupied the President Roosevelt in the closing days of his life," said the *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent, James Reston, in a dispatch from Washington.

"The realization is being forced upon officials in Washington that only by negotiation can they hope to salvage any kind of successful policy in Asia.

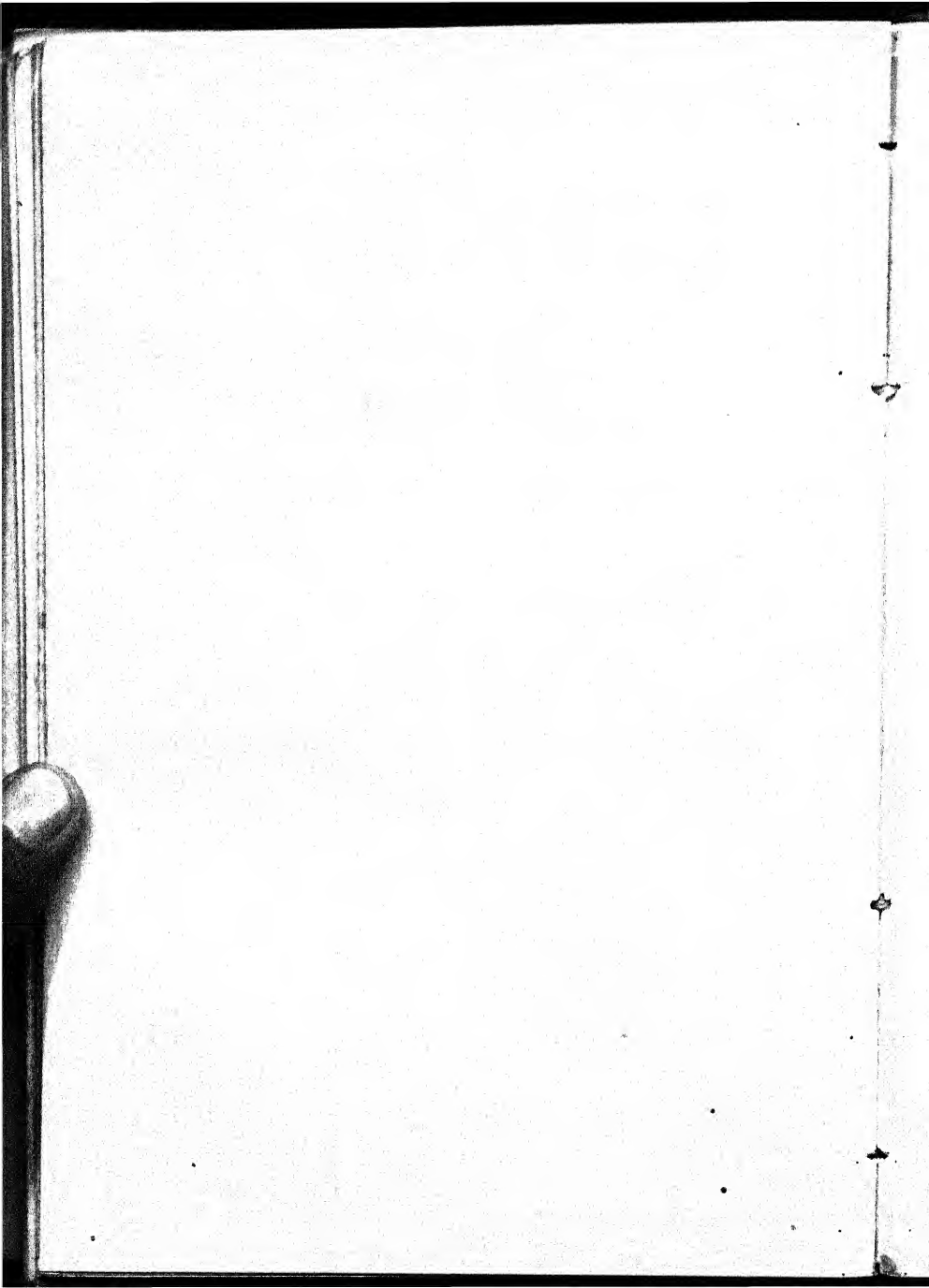
"In a way, that is what the Nehru mission illustrates. It is the beginning of a new phase of direct negotiation on the basis of equality with the new leaders of the Asian continent," Reston said.

PART III

VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT
[A Biographical Study]

*You must remember that true patriotism
is in your blood.*

—MOTILAL NEHRU



The interests of our country
demand our unity in the face of
a common and growing danger.
Let us not hold back, because
remember---If India dies, who
lives? If India lives, who dies?

Vijayalakshmi Pandit

Chapter One

GOING HER WAY

Jawaharlal Nehru and his two sisters, Swarup and Krishna, formed the happy trio of the Nehru family. Swarup grew up to be Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the happy warrior of India's freedom. Even though the name of Swarup Nehru changed due to her marriage, she is a true-blue Nehru and the blood of Motilal runs through her as through Jawaharlal.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit and Madame Chiang Kai-shek were born together in 1900. They marked momentous movements of nationalism in Asia. Lakshmi was born on August 18, 1900.

It was a year of drought and famine in India. The new baby, however, brought showers of rain. Swarup was a happy addition to the family. At last Jawaharlal had his playmate. Anand Bhawan was a big house and it required at least two to play. The palatial house was built only a year before the baby was born. So it was just ready to receive her.

I. CHILDHOOD

Jawaharlal and Swarup had another playmate seven years after. She was a girl too. A baby-sister of theirs. And her name was Krishna. All the three children were put in

charge of an English governess. They had a happy time in the happy house. It was a large family of cousins and nephews with silken bonds of affection. This was the time when the Nehru family had achieved the zenith of prosperity. The costliest luxuries were available in the family. Motilal had very expensive dogs, horses and carriages. He also bought ponies for children. Jawaharlal and Swarup used to ride every day. Swarup was exceedingly beautiful and made much of in the family. She was the apple of her parents' eyes.

Miss Hooper, the European governess, brought up the little girl with every consideration. She was an excellent governess, with extremely good qualifications and came from a very good family. Swarup was brought up with the greatest possible fondness as if she were the only child of the Nehrus. When she was found riding on the pony, she was considered spoiled by the friends of Motilal. The people did not appreciate the physical culture of riding.

At a very early age, Swarup accompanied her parents on a voyage to Europe. They also paid a visit to Germany. Jawaharlal was admitted at Harrow, and Swarup returned to India with her mummy and daddy without her brother.

There was a clock-work regularity in the daily routine of Swarup. Early in the morning she went out riding on a beautiful pony. A ring was specially laid out for her in the

gardens of the palatial house so that she could ride at home if she did not like to go out.

Swarup was not allowed by her governess to see a movie, but she taught her dancing. But her parents did not approve of her dancing. So this passion had also to be nipped in the bud. Notwithstanding his heavy engagements, Motilal found a few minutes to spend with Swarup.

Swarup was more docile than her sister Krishna. The latter was obstinate. Swarup was more reasonable. Krishna had a wild temper which often got the better of her. Swarup was perfectly self-controlled.

"To be punished," says Krishna, "locked up alone, or deprived of my supper was a frequent occurrence with me but it rarely happened to my sister (Swarup). She was always obedient and docile, because it was less troublesome to obey than to disobey."

After riding in the morning the children had lessons with the governess. Then they had lunch. After lunch there was seista. Then they had a lesson in piano. In the evening they went out for a drive.

"Jawahar, Swarup and I," says Krishna, "learnt to ride almost as soon as learnt to walk."

II. GIRLHOOD

It was the year of grace nineteen hundred and fifteen, and Swarup was fifteen years old. The Congress and the Moslem League came together at Bombay as the Ganga and the

Jumna meet at Allahabad. So Swarup travelled with her father from Allahabad to Bombay to attend the Congress. For Motilal Bombay held great politics. And for Swarup it promised great fun. There indeed she had great fun. But she was not impressed by the political mumbo-jumbo. She could not understand the theatricals.

"Congress in 1915," says Vijayalakshmi, "was a stylish affair. One wore one's prettiest clothes and had a good time meeting people from other parts of India and going to parties."

When Swarup was seventeen Miss Hooper bade good-bye to Anand Bhawan. She had served them for twelve long years. Now she fell in love with an English friend of hers. And they married. In the absence of her parents, Motilal gave her away in the church.

After the departure of Miss Hooper, Swarup was left to fend for herself. Simultaneously the Nehrus were undergoing a metamorphosis. Motilal Nehru and his son were going deeper and deeper into the slough of politics and the whole family was following in their footsteps. A grim and gloomy reality faced Miss Hooper. Mahatma Gandhi had ushered a new era of open defiance to the British authority.

"Naturally," says Vijayalakshmi, "I fell under his magic spell and co-operated joyfully in helping to complete the change in our life which had begun with his entrance into the family."

Miss Hooper's absence was greatly felt. Lakshmi had to look after her younger sister. Mother was too frail to do so. Krishna thus describes her guardianship :

"She was seldom strict with me and more often than not I did just as I liked. That was less trouble for her and it suited me. I was very fond of poetry and so was she. Many a delightful evening was spent in the garden, she reading out aloud and I listening to her with rapt attention. A bond existed between us that was rare and beautiful. Swarup was my guide, philosopher and friend during those days of my childhood."

In character the two girls were psychologically different. Krishna was a troublesome child while Swarup was faithful and obedient. Krishna had the iron will of her father while Swarup had the sweetness of her mother. In accordance with the spirit of the times Swarup had never gone to school and was educated at home like other girls. But Krishna insisted on going to school. And she went.

In 1919 Mahatma Gandhi visited Allahabad and stayed at the Anand Bhawan. Swarup had the opportunity to study him at close quarters. The tragic happenings at Amritsar which were the topic of the day left an indelible impression upon Swarup. Her father and brother both joined the non-co-operation movement started by Gandhiji. Lakshmi was not merely a silent spectator of revolutionary changes at home and in the country. She was developing determination and dauntlessness.

III. YOUTH

Vijayalakshmi was slowly blossoming out into a soldier of non-violence. She was an ardent admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and was prepared to stake her all. Her father presided over the Amritsar session of the Indian National Congress in 1919. It brought great inspiration to her. The entire family of the Nehrus dedicated itself to Gandhiji. And Lakshmi brought her qualities of head and heart to the same temple.

"Will you marry me?" said a romantic scholar.

"Yes," said Vijayalakshmi.

That is how Ranjit S. Pandit and Vijayalakshmi were married. The wooer seemed to have come out of the fairyland of literature. He was a cultured barrister from Kathiawad and crossed many bridges to meet her. The match was brought about by Mahadev Desai, the Secretary of Mahatma Gandhi.

"It seems only the other day," writes Vijayalakshmi, "that he came to me in Anand Bhawan and asked me to read an article in the *Modern Review* by a dear friend of his—a young man whom he described as very brilliant and most lovable. The year was 1920, the article was entitled *At the Feet of the Guru*, and the name of the author was Ranjit Pandit. For twenty-two years now I have been the wife of this most brilliant and most lovable man. Ranjit and Mahadev were at college together and graduated in the same year. Although they seldom corresponded, there was

a deep bond of sympathy and affection between them."

Now both the friends have passed away.

It was through Desai that Swarup had come to know her future husband. A mere literary introduction warmed up into a loving friendship. And they married with the consent of Mahatma Gandhi.

"I have come many miles," said Ranjit, "and crossed many bridges to come to you but in future you and I must cross our bridges hand in hand."

They were married at Allahabad on May 10, 1921. The ceremony was performed as lavishly as that of Madame Chiang. There were hundreds of guests, friends and relations. The entire Working Committee of the Congress was there. A district conference had brought thousands of peasants to the sleepy town. The English residents feared a violent uprising. The date fixed for the marriage also happened to be the anniversary of the Revolt of 1857. And that added to the worries of the police department.

"I learnt one day," writes Jawaharlal, "through a barrister friend that many Englishmen were thoroughly upset and expected some sudden upheaval in the city. They distrusted their Indian servants and carried about revolvers in their pockets. It was also said privately that the Allahabad Fort was kept in readiness for the English colony to retire there in case of need. I was much surprised and could not possibly make out why any one should

contemplate the possibility of a rising in the sleepy and peaceful city of Allahabad just when the very apostle of non-violence was going to visit us. Oh, it was said, May 10th (the date accidentally fixed for my sister's marriage) was the anniversary of the outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut in 1857 and this was going to be celebrated ! ”

There are political marriages and there are marriages that terminate political activities, but the marriage of Vijayalakshmi Pandit was neither a political affair nor did it put a stop to her political enthusiasm. Aruna Asaf Ali married a politician husband, but Vijayalakshmi preferred a sweet sensitive scholar of a retiring nature and thereby established a domestic counterbalance.

The marriage was a happy one and it led to a happy contented life between the couple. In the course of time they had three daughters—Chandralekha, Nayantara and Rita Vitasta. Vijayalakshmi says in her reminiscences :

“ There have been many ups and downs in our life, some of the bridges we have had to cross were shaky, they threatened to give way, but always we have gone over together, and even after eighteen years I can still be glad for that day in November when we met each other.”

Ranjit S. Pandit was a great scholar of Indian and foreign languages. The couple led a very cultured life. Vijayalakshmi's references to her husband are always references to

books. Books and Ranjit went hand in hand and they crossed the bridges together. Jawaharlal quotes the following lines of his brother-in-law in his *Autobiography* :

“Shadow is itself unrestrained in its path while sunshine as an incident of its very nature is pursued a hundredfold by nuance. Thus is sorrow from happiness a thing apart ; the scope of happiness, however, is hampered by the aches and hurts of endless sorrows.”

IV. WOMANHOOD

In March, 1926, Lakshmi and Ranjit went to Europe. They toured the Continent extensively. They returned to India laden with much useful experience. It was followed by a period of tranquillity. She was digesting the experiences of her life and preparing for the battle ahead. When Lakshmi and Ranjit returned home, Jawaharlal and Kamla were still in Europe. In the summer of 1927 Motilal also planned a trip to Europe. Before his departure he wrote :

“You and *Bhai* (Jawahar) have both been insisting on my taking a holiday in Europe and this end Swarup and Ranjit are doing the same and at last I find it possible to go away in the near future. I am bit tired with the public work that I have been doing for the last seven years and it is disturbing to find at the end of this long period that I have failed to advance the cause of my country in any appreciable way. So I have decided to take holiday and no more deny myself the leisure

of being with all of you."

The advice in the same letter which Motilal gave to Krishna was equally intended for Vijayalakshmi :

" You seem to have turned quite a little politician, but do not think that being a girl will in any way be a handicap to you. Many women have taken as great a part in the uplift of this country as any man has done and some have distinguished themselves much more than men. It is all a question of feelings towards one's country and how seriously one applies oneself to the question of uplift. There is no bar to sex—on the contrary a determined woman's influence is much greater than a man can ever sway. So there is every chance for you. You must remember that true patriotism is in your blood and unless you actively suppress it, it is bound to assert itself sooner or later."

Vijayalakshmi watched with great pleasure her brother becoming president of the Indian National Congress in 1929. Then there followed the non-violent non-co-operation and Vijayalakshmi responded to the call of the hour. She delivered burning speeches. She led processions. She organised hartals. She ran from place to place. A notice was served on her prohibiting her from taking part in the movement for one month. But she refused to obey the order. She was arrested on January 27, 1932. Her younger sister was also arrested. All the members of the Nehru family went behind the bars. The old mother

was the last to walk in.

Vijayalakshmi was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment with fine. Her younger sister was sentenced to one year's imprisonment without fine. They were kept in the Lucknow gaol. The youngest child of Lakshmi was less than three years old. But she could not help. She had to part company with her affectionate children. The country was aflame with patriotism end to end.

Vijayalakshmi describes her first experience of public speaking as follows :

"I hadn't a thought in my head and not a trace of inspiration could I get from the faces around me. It was a difficult moment. Quite suddenly something happened. The crowd before me was a part of myself. We were both part of some bigger unseen forces ; the message was there, it had only to be delivered. I spoke and the crowd cheered. I was happy in my little success. After this I was called upon to speak quite often."

Vijayalakshmi had much more difficulty with the cultured classes than with the common people. She expected the students to be equipped with current information and so she tried to deliver a literary address but she only met with blank faces. So she started talking to them face to face in a conversational way. There she was a great success. When she became a minister in U.P. this experience of the cultured classes and their ways came to her quite handy.

In January, 1931, Motilal Nehru fell seriously ill. Vijayalakshmi, Kamla, Krishna, Jawaharlal and other relatives hovered round his bed. At night they took turns at his bedside. If Motilal wanted anything he asked for it apologetically. He did not want to bother anybody. He thought of others. He never thought of himself.

"Often he joked with Gandhiji," says Krishna, "or teased mother about his going ahead of her and waiting to meet her in the next world, but never did he feel afraid of what he knew must be the inevitable end."

Early in the morning of February 6, 1931, Motilal passed away.

"Motilal is not dead," said Gandhiji, "he will live long."

It was the greatest shock to Vijayalakshmi. She was worn-out and haggard. She seemed to have aged overnight. Unspeakable grief was written on her face. She felt the loss very deeply. She felt utterly lost without him. The pillar of the house had fallen. Jawaharlal was like a balm to her. He consoled every member of the family.

The Nehrus were undaunted. They were all the more determined to fight for the cause for which the head of the family had laid down his life. When the non-co-operation started after the failure of the Round Table Conference, the entire family took part. Vijayalakshmi was the first to be served with a notice. Soon Kamla and Krishna also got an order to keep aloof from political

activities. But the Nehrus were born of sterner stuff. They deliberately kept silent until the Independence Day. And then they delivered fiery speeches. There was a lathi-charge and the Nehru girls were arrested. They did not offer any defence. Most of the Nehrus were in gaol. It was a good education for Lakshmi. She made many friends among the convicts.

Chapter Two

THE FIRST WOMAN MINISTER

After a thorough education in a British prison, Vijayalakshmi plunged herself into political activity with greater vigour than ever.

When the general elections came off in 1936, the Congress swept the polls in seven provinces. Vijayalakshmi stood from Cawnpore-Bilhaur Rural Constituency as a candidate for the United Provinces Legislative Assembly. There were about thirty-eight thousand and nine hundred voters. Lady Srivastava, the wife of the then Minister of Education, was her opponent in the field. It was Vijayalakshmi's first experience of active political electioneering.

"Previous to that," says Vijayalakshmi, "my knowledge of elections had been vague and corresponded somewhat to Hyde Park oratory."

I. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The election campaign was a new revelation to her. She toured the province like a whirlwind. Everywhere there was a demand for her by the Congress workers who needed her for addressing the public meetings. She travelled by motor-car as well as by bullock-cart. A contact with the poverty-stricken people enriched her experience of life. She was fighting a difficult seat. But the name of the Congress

inspired the voters. They were voting for the Congress and not any individual. Many times she moved incognito and tried to fathom the feelings of the people for her. The election was a memorable experience. Once she heard an American saying :

“ What has Vijayalakshmi done ? ”

And she heard an Indian student speaking to him in a second-class waiting room :

“ Done ! She does not have to do anything. She is our mother and sister and she will win ”

Vijayalakshmi won the elections by one thousand votes.

II. ENTERING THE CABINET

When the election fever was over, Vijayalakshmi received a telegram from Govind Ballabh Pant, inviting her to join the cabinet. She had no mind to join the ministry. In fact she was opposed to office-acceptance. The advice of valued friends induced her to accept the responsibility. In offering her a membership of the cabinet, the Congress was encouraging women to enter politics and that is what she herself desired. Therefore her entry into the cabinet was a great satisfaction to everybody.

On Thursday, July 29, 1937, the United Provinces Assembly met at the Assembly Hall at 11 a.m. There she took oath as the Minister for Local Self-Government. Before her ideas of the Assembly were vague and hazy. Now she had come face to face with concrete reality. She was not new to public speaking but in the

Assembly she was making her maiden speech. The first resolution was to reject the Government of India Act. It was to be moved by the Premier. But Govind Pant being ill, the burden fell on Lakshmi Pandit. She made a courageous speech before the educated audience. She picked up the technique of the Assembly in no time. The resolution was passed in spite of opposition. It was resolved :

“ This Assembly is of opinion that the Government of India Act, 1935, in no way represents the will of the nation and is wholly unsatisfactory, as it has been designed to perpetuate the subjection of the people of India. This Assembly demands that this should be repealed and replaced by a constitution for free India framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise, which allows the Indian people full scope for development according to their needs and desires.”

III. LAKSHMI AT WORK

“ From her childhood,” says Krishna, “ Swarup had been a very tactful person and was eminently suited to become a minister. She seldom, if ever, gets agitated over anything and deals with all kinds of situations in a calm unruffled manner. Charming, self-possessed and beautiful, she had little difficulty in winning people over. As minister she was a great success. It was a difficult task she undertook to perform, never having been trained for work of that type, but she excelled herself at this

and was very popular. When Swarup started taking part in politics, her ability as speaker surprised us all. She seemed to have been born to it and seldom showed any signs of nervousness, no matter how large the gathering which she had to address. She speaks with fluency and ease both in Hindustani and in English."

She was perfectly new to secretariat administration but she managed to get through things efficiently and satisfactorily.

"I had," she says, "an exceedingly vague idea of the duties of a minister when on the 18th July, 1937, I entered my office room in the Civil Secretariat for the first time."

Her Personal Assistant, who was well acquainted with the routine, wondered at her efficiency. She proceeded in an innocent almost childlike way. She enquired whether some of the superfluous furniture could be removed from her room. And it was removed. Pink carpet struck a discordant note against the apple-green distemper on the walls. She surveyed the room with a sinking heart. The pink carpet was immediately replaced by a delightful bluish green. She brought bluish green curtains from her home. She also had a green bowl furnished with flowers.

Having set right her surroundings she proceeded to work. Heaps of files were lying on the table for orders. She plunged into them straightway.

"Soon," she says, "I was engrossed in it and by the time I had read it through, felt

quite competent to pass an order."

IV. IN THE LIMELIGHT

As a minister, and that too a woman, she came into limelight. The journalist and the telephone pursued her everywhere.

"It is my opinion," she said, "that two greatest pests in the world today are the telephone and the journalist. The telephone can, however, be disconnected, but the journalist cannot."

She was tired of the journalists, because they deliberately misrepresented her. Once a journalist in Europe had asked her :

"What do you think of physical culture ?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "I am a believer in it especially the Indian variety."

And next day the paper announced, "Woman minister begins eighteen-hour day by standing on head !"

Her experience was similar with journalists in India as well as abroad. Once she was advocating liberty for women and she was reported as "Mrs. Pandit supporting divorce for women !"

But nevertheless, she fought doggedly for the cause of women inside and outside the Assembly. She showed a great presence of mind in facing all kinds of hecklers. Once in March, 1938, she was making a reference to women in the Assembly when a member interrupted.

"Are not," said H. G. Walford, "the women of this country depressed and suppressed ?"

"Mr. Walford has rightly said," she stated, "that women are depressed and suppressed."

And then she added in a low emotional tone, "I say they are oppressed also." Her remark was surpassingly effective. But she did not end there. She would not let the members go unremonstrated :

"And since I have this opportunity I would like to request some of the honourable members who have made such chivalrous and beautifully high-sounding speeches about women to try and come forward and translate all this beauty of words into the beauty of action."

She vigorously supported the policy of the Congress ministry for rural reconstruction. She carried policies of the Congress High Command with might and main.

"The Government desire," she said to the House, "that in every village and in every district there should be adequate arrangement to safeguard public health. Everyone should get satisfactory medical aid. . . the present rate of infant mortality should be checked. We wish to do all this and we will do all this."

As the Minister for Local Self-Government she solved many difficult problems. In the budget for 1938-39 she presented a scheme proposing three hundred dispensaries in the rural areas. Two hundred dispensaries were to be under the charge of Indian practitioners of indigenous system of medicine. She was convinced of Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicines and stuck to her guns in spite of opposition from some members. Provision of

maternity facilities was another arduous task which she undertook. The Red Cross Society was aided by the Government for the training of nurses, but the work was not successful.

"I regret," she said to the House, "to have to admit that these midwives (mostly Christians) are not at all popular, and in spite of the fact that Red Cross Society has turned out more midwives now who are slightly better trained and of a better social standing, still they are looked down upon with suspicion and even these *dais* are available, the women of the part, prefer not to make use of their services.

"People must be convinced that the work of a midwife is not a work to be looked down upon and done by the lowest in the land but that it is honourable work. This sort of thing can only be done by propaganda."

Vijayalakshmi had the medical school for women at Agra converted into a nursing centre from January 11, 1939. A masterly anti-malarial scheme was prepared and eighty thousand rupees were provided in the budget. Thirty-five thousand rupees were provided for drinking-water facilities in villages. Playgrounds were opened for exercise in towns and villages. Forty-five thousand rupees were sanctioned for forty-eight districts. The district and municipal boards were also requested to provide further facilities out of their own funds. Vijayalakshmi also had a milk scheme for children, but the idea was postponed due to financial stringency. In Agra district the experiment was tried with some success.

“ We do not wish to spend,” she said, “ a single pie of tax-payers’ money without the fullest consideration.”

Referring to untouchability she said : “ It is sometimes asked what has the Congress ministry done for the *Achhuts* (Untouchables). The honourable members perhaps do not know that in the Congress there is no *Achhut*. The very word, which is repugnant to humanity, is not to be found in the Congress dictionary.”

Chapter Three

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

The golden plums of ministerships never turned the heads of true patriots, who are always ready to walk out of the cushioned chairs at the shortest notice and sleep with their boots on. So was Vijayalakshmi.

In the summer of 1939 the horizon in Europe was overshadowed with war-clouds. The Viceroy declared war on behalf of India and this was resented by the Congress. The Congress wanted to know the war aims of Britain. If Britain was fighting for democracy, why should not India be set free immediately? If Britain was fighting for imperialism, as she really was, why should she expect help from India which was already a victim of their imperialism?

I. ROAD TO RESIGNATION

The Congress put very rough questions to British statesmen who showed an infinite indifference to the question of India's freedom. Consequently the Congress ministries decided to resign by way of protest. In October, 1939, a resolution was presented to the United Provinces Legislative Assembly by Govind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of the Province. He denounced the British for having India into the war without her consent. He

demanding that India should be declared independent. And India should be allowed to frame her own constitution. Vijayalakshmi who supported the resolution said :

“ Sir, I rise to support the resolution before the House. . . . Our country has been made a participant in a war which is being fought many thousands of miles away from here. Our opinion and advice has not been sought, because being an enslaved nation of what value is our opinion or our advice. We are informed that this war that is being fought is a war of righteousness, that this is being fought for those principles which go to make life worth living whether for the individual or for the nation. But these brave words have ceased to have any meaning for us because throughout the centuries Britain has prefaced all declarations of war in a similar manner. It is, therefore, our right to know where we stand. It is our right to demand from Britain what the better world order is which we are to create. . . .

“ Let us put our heads together and evolve a better method of democratic procedure. . . We have enough experience of empty promises in the past. Let us not fall into the trap again, for years and years the British policy has been to magnify our differences, seeing divergence of policies were merely differences of temperaments.

“ Let us now give a challenge to Britain that the people of India stand united and if our co-operation is of any value to Britain, it

can be conceded as a free nation and as an equal partner. If our just demand is rejected, the war degenerates into a war between two imperialistic powers for world domination. The interests of our country demand our unity in the face of a common and growing danger. Let us not hold back, because remember—If India dies, who lives? If India lives, who dies?"

Vijayalakshmi Pandit had introduced many useful measures. Many more useful measures were lying on her table. In obedience to the Congress High Command she resigned the ministership leaving the good work where it was. The battle of freedom is infinitely more important than any parliamentary programme. The Congress has long realised that imperialism must be rooted out. It should not be struck branch by branch. What we want is complete independence. Petty reforms will not do. Imperialism is the source of all evils. Therefore, we must weed it out.

II. SYMBOLIC SATYAGRAHA

Mahatma Gandhi started individual satyagraha which was intended as a token of civil disobedience. It was also meant to test the fabric of imperialism and the texture of the freedom forces in the country. Vijayalakshmi offered her services to Mahatma Gandhi. And Gandhiji enrolled her as an individual satyagrahi.

On December 9, 1940, Vijayalakshmi was arrested and she was sentenced to four

months' simple imprisonment. She spent the full term in Naini Central Gaol.

While Vijayalakshmi Pandit was locked up, the country was gasping for freedom. New forces were shaping themselves and Gandhiji, the architect of destiny, was building ceaselessly in the walls of time. New ideas were surging in the masses. The monster of war was astride in Europe. Britain could not talk peacefully of freedom and democracy any more.

III. CHIANGS COME TO INDIA

Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek visited India early in 1942. They have been since long the personal friends of Nehrus. Vijayalakshmi organised a public reception for Madame Chiang under the auspices of All-India Women's Conference at the Lady Irwin College, New Delhi, on February 12, 1942. Vijayalakshmi read the welcome address.

"Mrs. Pandit," said Madame Chiang, "some time ago invited me to visit India, but owing to work I did not feel that I ought to leave China just then. The inward urge that I should come has been, however, latent for a long time. Therefore, when the Generalissimo decided to take the trip, this urge became crystallised into action."

Madame Chiang stayed only for a short time in India and throughout her sojourn, Vijayalakshmi accompanied her.

IV. QUIT INDIA

In August, 1942, the Indian National Con-

gress launched upon Quit-India Movement. "Do or die" was the watchword. The Government arrested the leaders but released public passions. There was such a fury that the Government could not control it.

On August 12, 1942, Vijayalakshmi Pandit was awakened by the police in the small hours of the morning. They had come to arrest her at that unearthly hour.

"My mind," says Lakshmi, "was a confused jumble of events of the preceding twenty-four hours. The shots fired on the students' procession were still ringing in my ears. I could only see the faces of those young men whom I had helped to pick and remove to hospital. It was utterly weary in mind and body and more than a little dazed."

Her daughters were asleep. She went to porch and switched on the light. The verandah was full of constables.

"Why is it necessary," she enquired, "for so many men to come to arrest one unarmed woman?"

Nobody replied.

Lakshmi awakened her girls and broke to them the news. They were brave as always. They grasped the situation immediately. There was no fuss. The girls helped mummy to pack up things.

"I wish I could go too," said Rita. "Mummy darling take care of yourself. We shall be fighting the British outside while you are in."

Gaol confinement affected her health. After nine months' imprisonment she was released on account of illness. And that was only a short parole.

"With sinking heart," says Krishna, "I got out of the tonga and went in search of Swarup. I entered her room, she got up to greet me and embrace me. I put my arms around her trying not to let her see how moved I was at her changed appearance. A year ago I had seen her looking ten years younger than she really was. Nine months she had been in gaol and was out for a few short weeks now. Once more gaol had wrought havoc on a loved one and left its mark all too plainly on the face which had aged considerably in those few months."

Lakshmi and her husband were kept in the same gaol but in different wards.

"He is somewhere on the other side of the wall," writes Vijayalakshmi, "and yet how far away. I have such a longing to see and speak to him."

The daughters of Lakshmi were also arrested and kept with her in the same ward. In April, 1943, Lekha was released during the parole of her mother. She discussed with her the problem of her going to America for education. It was decided that Tara should also go. Vijayalakshmi cabled to her friends in America. The reply from the President of Wellesley College came in forty-eight hours :

"Wellesley College is proud and pleased to welcome your daughters."

It was a big relief to the mother. She had

a good deal of botheration in getting dollar exchange. At last she saw off the girls and drove back to the prison.

"We shall keep the flag flying darling," said the girls as the train steamed off, "wherever we are."

Had Pandit girls not gone to America ahead of their mother, Vijayalakshmi Pandit perhaps would never have gone there. It was primarily to see her daughters that Vijayalakshmi went to the U.S.A. It was a good stroke of luck even though destiny drove her on blindfold.

Chapter Four

THE UNOFFICIAL AMBASSADOR

When the Pandit girls were in America, they prepared a ground for the visit of their mother, because when Vijayalakshmi left the shores of India in November, 1944, her attraction was not glamour of the New World but rather her girls who were separated from her. Now that the prison walls were removed, she could not keep away from the flesh of her flesh and the bone of her bone. Oceans are no hindrance to maternal affections.

F. SAN FRANCISCO CONFERENCE

The conference of the United Nations was to be held at San Francisco in May, 1945. India was represented by such puppets as Ramaswami Mudaliar and Feroze Khan Noon. The people of India were highly indignant. The only hope of nationalism was the presence of Vijayalakshmi Pandit in America. And well did she rise up to our hopes. She arrived at San Francisco towards the end of April, 1945, and made it her centre of activities.

"Now that Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit is at San Francisco," stated an English paper of India, "her presence there must be giving the Indian delegation sleepless nights."

There is little doubt of that. Vijayalakshmi Pandit appeared like a new thunder

in the New World. She flashed like a lightning from coast to coast. Many unknown friends of India suddenly appeared out of the horizon like a great camouflaged army to greet as the ambassador of a great country.

Gentlemen and ladies arrived at San Francisco from hundreds of miles to welcome Vijaya-lakshmi and load her with flowers. J. J. Singh and Anup Singh were of particular use to her in arranging for her programme and publicity. She fired her lead directly at the U.N.O.

"I desire to make it clear," she said, "that the so-called Indian representatives attending the San Francisco Conference have not the slightest representative capacity. They have no sanction, no mandate from any of the responsible groups in India and are merely nominees of the British Government. Anything they say here or any vote they cast can have no binding effect or force on the people of India."

The message of Lakshmi resounded in the U.S.A. and her words had the desired effect. Thus Iftone, the well-known journalist, wrote :

"They (Indian delegates) have been chosen by the Government without consultation of Indian parties or political leaders most of whom are still in gaol including the far-seeing Nehru who would have shown even in the gathering of giants."

The Indian representatives were fully aware of their unrepresentative character. They felt shy of the American journalists who put to them very unpleasant questions. Their con-

ferences were thinly attended while Vijayalakshmi was drawing all the crowds. Feroze Khan Noon tried to use his stenographer as a heckler at the press conference of Lakshmi but the secret soon leaked out and the heckler was disgracefully pushed out of the conference.

"It must have been most uncomfortable for his boss," wrote Pasbom of the *Associated Press of America*, "to learn today that the efforts of his stooge instead of disrupting Mrs. Pandit's press conference have boomeranged and Mrs. Pandit has received much wider publicity both at the radio and the press than she might have otherwise. Yesterday evening and this morning papers have given her a prominent space with pictures. One paper had a big picture of Mrs. Pandit being garlanded by Amritlal Seth and a small picture of Khan with his name and 'ejected from conference'."

On behalf of the India League of America and the National Committee for India's Freedom Vijayalakshmi Pandit submitted a memorandum to the San Francisco Conference. She called for an immediate declaration of India's independence. She described the Indian problem as "the acid test of the principles on which the hopes of the conference are postulated."

She stated that India's dependent status is "not only grave moral and political wrong to India but a travesty of the claim that the United Nations' Conference consists of representatives of sovereign states. The

imperialist system should now be renounced in principle and abandoned in practice by an unequivocal acknowledgment and declaration of a free India."

Vijayalakshmi Pandit declared that she also spoke on behalf of Burma, Malaya, Indo-China and Dutch Indies for whom she claimed "liberation from all alien imperialism."

In the memorandum she described herself as "Madame Vijayalakshmi Pandit, spokesman for India."

"We all know," said Commissar Molotov, "that a time will come when the voice of independent India will be heard."

"Why should not such a voice be heard now?" asked Vijayalakshmi. "The Indian National Congress Party, representing the Indian people, has always stood uncompromisingly against fascism, nazism and imperialism."

She brought out the case of India from every angle and placed it in the limelight:

"The voice of some six hundred million enslaved people of Asia may not be officially heard at this conference and those who have usurped their birthright and freedom may cynically claim to speak for them, but there will be no real peace on this earth so long as they are denied justice. Recognition of India's independence now will be a proclamation and assurance to the whole world that the statement of the United Nations assembled at the solemn conclave at San Francisco have in truth and honour heralded the dawn of a new

and better day for an all but crucified humanity."

Vijayalakshmi Pandit met President Truman and Lady Truman. She entertained Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. She met a large number of prominent visitors from abroad and presented India's case to everybody.

II. MESSAGE TO AMERICA

Vijayalakshmi spoke beneath the gold dome of California Sacramento. She stated that new ties forged between India and America will solve problems of the world.

Mrs. Pandit spoke passionately to the members of the California Legislature who had honoured her with an invitation. She said :

"So long as the colonial vested interests remain, there can be no peace, there can be no security. And so long as there is no security or peace, we shall go on destroying all that generations and centuries of human effort have built up. I believe these new ties will work for common good between peoples of the world - because it is the people who are going to build up the world structure."

The California Legislature had adjourned a debate on the State's budget to hear her speak. They sat at the back of rows of desks littered with financial papers to hear her eloquent address. There was a full house to hear her speak. They sat in silence. They applauded only when the speech was over. Ernst Debbs thanking her on behalf of the Legislators, said :

"A hundred and fifty years ago we in the United States were striving for the same thing which you are striving for. I feel strongly on the subject of freedom not for India but for all peoples of the world."

Vijayalakshmi Pandit visited Baltimore on April 9, 1945. Her visit received the highest official recognition. The Mayor of Baltimore welcomed her at the station and presented her "keys of the city". These keys are reserved for the most notable guests. In her lecture in the city's largest auditorium thirty per cent of the audience consisted of Negroes, Indians, Chinese and Japanese.

"India stands for equality," said Mrs. Pandit.

On May 15, 1945, she spoke to five thousand Sikhs near California. She spoke from the dais in the famous Stockton Sikh temple which is the only building of its kind in America.

"Our fight," said Lakshmi, "is much bigger than the fight for freedom of just one people. It is a fight for a world-wide freedom. You Americans have been watching San Francisco and hoping that from this conference will come a just and lasting peace. But it cannot be success when the people who are there claim to settle the destiny of the world without first consulting the wishes of the people of the world. For us—who are outside the conference—it is very important to draw the attention of the delegates to the principles of right and justice on which a lasting peace must be built. Our leaders forget when deciding on

important issues that personal freedom is one of the most important concepts upon which world peace is founded.

"Today we cannot afford to make any mistakes in planning the future of mankind. We made some grave mistakes after the last war and endured unheard-of miseries and sufferings. Today the world cannot endure any more suffering. This time we have to decide to make good the mistakes made after the last war.

"Only through the freedom of India can we contribute to the freedom of the rest of the world."

Vijayalakshmi also addressed the American public over the radio. She said in a broadcast talk :

"Not the atomic bomb but greater explosives of greed and imperialism threaten the world today."

Vijayalakshmi Pandit spared no pains to put forward the cause of India and other suppressed people of the world in the most courageous and convincing spirit. Her message to America is summed up in the following extract from one of her speeches in America :

"In the freedom of India lies the hope of a settlement of the world problem. Free India becomes a force for good in the East and the whole problem of Pacific becomes more easy of solution. A discontented India means a discontented Asia. There can be no lasting peace unless it is based on the recognition of human rights. The first step in this direction

is the freedom of those countries still under foreign domination. Unless this is done, the present global conflict becomes merely a war for power with no moral sanction behind it. Statements are not enough. Good intentions do not go very far. It is only actions that will help in clarifying the issues and so far no such action has been taken by the United Nations. If the plan for post-war world is to concentrate on power and to impose systems of security on weaker nations, it is bound to fail. Civilisation is not a monopoly of the whiteman. Asia and Africa have a heritage which stretches far back into antiquity and the world is as much in need of a message of these great continents as any that Europe and America have to give."

Chapter Five

THE OFFICIAL AMBASSADOR

Vijayalakshmi Pandit returned to India as a heroine towards the end of January, 1946. She had hauled the British imperialists and badly mauled their Indian apologists. She was profusely garlanded as she landed at the American airbase at Karachi.

Returning home Vijayalakshmi picked up the threads of the unfinished yarn of constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi as stoutly as ever. She stood again for elections and was re-elected. Once again she became a minister in the Congress Cabinet for the United Provinces and back she came to her chair in the U.P. Secretariat. Once again she picked up the reform acts which she could not carry through before the ministerial crisis in 1939. She had come to do many things left undone or only half-done. The wheel had come full circle, but India of 1946 was not the India of 1939. Vijayalakshmi could hear the drums of freedom behind the blue mountains. Will freedom come ? Come it must. And if it is late in coming, Vijayalakshmi will rush to meet it half-way. And if necessary she will gladly die in the path of independence.

"We may be still behind other nations," said Vijayalakshmi, "but the dawn breaks and the first bright rays are stealing over the

country giving hope to many weary hearts . . . India would live and her future would grow into a glorious thing."

Although Vijayalakshmi fought her first battles unofficially, she soon returned to America as the official representative of India to match her wits against General Smuts, a formidable foe, on the question of the Indians in South Africa.

In a message broadcast on the eve of her departure to the U.N.O. General Assembly, Vijayalakshmi Pandit said :

"In proceeding to the General Assembly of the United Nations, we are very conscious of the heavy responsibility that has been placed upon us.

"Little more than a year ago the organisation of the United Nations came into existence and the representative Assembly at San Francisco agreed to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small, and the world, grown weary with much bloodshed and suffering, turned hopeful eyes towards the new organisation, which promised to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of intolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours.

"Today the fundamental rights so recently promised to the peoples of the world are being denied to Indians living in South Africa, thus raising a question of moral and human issues which contain the gravest implications

for the future peace and progress of the world. The Indian delegation's task will be to claim for Indians in South Africa the removal of all restrictions imposed on them on grounds of race and colour and ensure to them the fundamental freedoms to which they are entitled.

"In fighting for those who share this denial of human rights and who suffer under foreign control, India stands for equality between peoples and for the independence of all colonial areas. We believe that an enduring peace cannot be achieved so long as there is discrimination against one race by another. This policy continues to sow the seeds of bitterness and strife in many parts of the globe and must be ended now and for all time, thus making it possible for the peoples of the world to contribute in building up the future. The Indian case in South Africa becomes, therefore, a test case not only on the question of human rights but also for the purposes and principles of the charter itself.

"We go to our task hopefully in the knowledge that we carry with us the support and goodwill of the men and women of India."

I. THE COLOURED MAN ON THE MARCH

General Smuts' reference to the South African Indian issue and his claim of the spiritual leadership of Europe in his speech at Brussels were challenged by Vijayalakshmi Pandit, leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Organisation Conference, in New York at a press conference.

Mrs. Pandit observed : " We challenge his statement regarding the spiritual leadership of Europe. The emphasis he has given and the fact that he has completely ignored the rest of the world itself shows that no matter how high sounding his phrases may be, he is not prepared to build up a new world on foundations of justice which will ensure peace and prosperity of future generations. There are other countries in the world outside Europe whose contributions to the thought, culture and regeneration of the world has been as great, if not greater, than the contributions ever made by Europe. They cannot be disposed of in this casual fashion. The fate of the world depends upon the recognition of the fact that all nations must co-operate as equals in reshaping the future. If this basic fact is not realised the human race is doomed. We believe that Asia has a great part to play in the shape of things to come. We are confident that our past will be a worthy one."

Clarifying how the South African Indian issue formed a test case, Mrs. Pandit pointed out that the problem of depressed classes in India was not a racial problem whereas the South African Indian issue contained in it the seeds of the third world war. It was a question of domination of white over the black. The coloured man was on the march and he would not tolerate the domination by the white because of the colour of the skin. It was, therefore, a fundamental human issue and it must go before the bar of world

opinion. No one individual, however great, should deal with it.

She continued : " India stands for complete equality between peoples of the world and between the nations of the world and as such India would take up the cause of any nation or any people whose fundamental human rights are denied. When those people happen to be from the mother countries India naturally shows more interest than in the cause of others."

Mrs. Pandit claimed that the delegation was fortunate in having the entire people of India behind it in the matter of South African Indian issue.

II. PORTUGUESE FASCISM

During U.N.O. deliberations, Mrs. Pandit favoured Eire but opposed Portugal's application for membership.

Regretting that Eire had not been recommended by the Security Council for membership Mrs. Pandit said : " We feel that Eire fully satisfies the conditons laid down in the Charter. India has always had certain fundamental sympathy with Eire. Eire is not merely a peace-loving but a freedom-loving country, eminently fitted for membership of the United Nations.

" Eire could not be admitted as an original member of the United Nations, because at that time the definition of a peace-loving country was that it should have declared war. That definition is no longer applicable.

“ Like India, Eire has fought long and hard for her freedom. Indeed our eminent patriots used to follow Irish methods for obtaining freedom. Later, however, thanks to the gospel of non-violence elaborated by Mahatma Gandhi, we have been following a different and noble method for the achievement of freedom. ”

Mrs. Pandit said : “ This, however, does not detract from our admiration for the tenacity and vigour with which Eire conducted her own struggle. ”

Mrs. Pandit said that the Indian delegation felt that Transjordan should also be a member of the United Nations. “ We have sympathy with Transjordan as a Middle East State, which has recently obtained independence. Doubts have been expressed in the Committee regarding the degree of independence which she has obtained, even if these doubts were justified, we feel that they should not stand in the way of Transjordan's membership of the United Nations. I say this as a subject of a country which has herself not yet obtained complete independence. ”

Mrs. Pandit said that the Indian delegation felt that the question of Albania's admission to the United Nations should be reconsidered. “ I was impressed by the figures given by the Soviet delegate regarding the sacrifices made by Albania, which was one of the first victims in the struggle against fascism and nazism during the war. ”

Mrs. Pandit continued : “ Among the applicants for admission to the United Nations

there is, in our opinion, one country and one only, which is definitely not fitted to be a member of the United Nations—I mean Portugal. I say this with regret, for I am fully aware of the magnificent contribution which Portugal has made to the sum total of human civilisation. The fact that a country had a great past should not blind us to its present conduct.

“The Portuguese Government is, from all accounts, authoritarian. It has distinctly a fascist flavour and its collaboration with Franco Spain does not add to its credit.

“Moreover, its colonial policy is thoroughly reactionary. I speak from experience, for we know what the Portuguese policy is and the manner in which Portugal has been dealing with her subjects in the tiny Portuguese settlement of Goa in India.”

Thus Mrs. Pandit hammered the Portuguese and perhaps she will hammer them again, because the Portuguese are sitting snugly on the edges of the hotbed in India, hoping against hopes that they might be able to keep up their tiny pimples in free India.

Expressing the Indian delegation's satisfaction that Afghanistan, Iceland and Sweden were going to be admitted to the United Nations, Mrs. Pandit said that she felt that if the General Assembly thought that the Security Council had refused to recommend a State for membership on inadequate or unfair grounds, then it was open to, and indeed incumbent on, the General Assembly to ask

the Security Council to reconsider its attitude. "For these reasons India will support any resolution which has this object in view."

III. MORAL ISSUES FOR INDIA

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, speaking at a reception given by the India League of America to Indian delegates to the United Nations General Assembly, said: "We regard the struggle of Indians in South Africa as a symbolic one. We look on what is happening in South Africa as a very grave challenge and unless the people who today are forming policies of the world realise how deep the current of hatred is, this discrimination, they will find, will once again bring the world into a conflict greater than it has ever known.

"The question should not be dealt with emotionally but in a manner which will peaceably solve the situation which has already sown seeds of very grave consequences. It threatens to envelop the whole human race if it is allowed to grow. We have to combine and do our very best to deal with it on a moral and political basis—on a basis that, what is said in the Unity Charter, must be implemented or it will amount to a mockery."

Mrs. Pandit asserted that India could stand and hold up her head in spite of difficulties. "In spite of coercing India has retained her moral values and has never been sidetracked from moral issues. We are still far from independence in India but a large number of people in India today know that independence is not

so much a political condition as a state of mind."

IV. THE DRAMATIC DUEL

Vijayalakshmi Pandit fought at her best to defend the rights of Indians in South Africa.

On November 22, 1946, there was a dramatic duel between General Smuts and Mrs. Pandit in the U.N.O.

The body which heard their rival speeches was the joint committee of the Political and Legal Committees meeting under the chairmanship of Senor Roberto Jimenez of Panama to consider the Indian complaint against South Africa.

The first speaker was Mrs. Pandit who presented India's case in a soft low voice. She was suffering from a cold and sat at the table with an overcoat over her *sari*.

The committee room was thronged with many people standing in its adjoining corridors to hear the battle between India and South Africa. There were many Indians in the public seats.

The Indian delegation appeared in full force, and sitting immediately behind Mrs. Pandit was the Bombay jurist, Justice M. C. Chagla.

There was a dead hush as Mrs. Pandit read her statement slowly and clearly. General Smuts sat quietly with little change of expression reflected on his face.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit declared : " The issue is a political not a legal one—not even an issue between the two countries alone, but in the

possibilities of its extent, a world issue.

"It calls for an effort in statesmanship. It will not be solved by unilateral insistence on some narrow concept of domestic jurisdiction. The only method of peaceable solution open in our opinion is the exercise by the United Nations of their collective wisdom and moral sanction in the cause of justice and fair play.

"The Government of India submit in all earnestness that their dispute with South Africa is properly a matter for discussion and disposal by the Assembly because the legislation to which they object offends against the purposes of the Charter. They submit with equal emphasis that the Assembly is concerned with this dispute because the law to which they object is not only 'likely to' but has already impaired friendly relations between the two member nations."

Mrs. Pandit added: "It has been urged that since conditions in India are worse than anything that exists in South Africa, Indians should not complain of the provisions of the Tenure Act which are designed to avert racial tensions that may endanger peace of all communities. The danger of this argument, proved by practical experience, lies in the fact that each new concession to prejudices of the politically dominant European community has led to fresh demands for racial discrimination. Comparison with conditions in India is profoundly misleading.

"In India we are doing everything in our power to remove as rapidly as possible social

evils which are an inheritance of the past. Neither in India nor before world opinion do we seek to justify this. In the Union what is being done is the reverse process of legislation disabilities which with us never had the force of law and which we are contending not without success to remove. Disappearing evils of India are not examples for the introduction of new or perpetuation of old evils in South Africa.

"The legal argument that the Government of the Union of South Africa are competent to legislate for any class of its nationals without interference, does not dispose of the fact that the legislation in question has resulted in severance of relations between India and Africa. Inasmuch as the cause of the dispute is racial, subordination of just claims of members of the race to unjust demands of another, its repercussions will extend beyond South Africa to India."

General Smuts delivered his "Defence" in quiet but emphatic tones occasionally rolling his head from one side to the other to bring out a point in his speech. At the conclusion of his statement General Smuts raising his voice slightly, moved his formal resolution that the matter be referred to the international court of advisory judgment on the "domestic jurisdictional aspects of the case".

The chairman suggested that the best procedure would be the appointment of a sub-committee of both legal and political committee representatives.

V. LAKSHMI ATTACKS BRITAIN

On November 28, 1946, opened the debate in the United Nations Joint Political and Legal Committee, where India's complaint against South Africa on the treatment of Indians in the Union was being discussed. The Chinese delegate, Dr. Wellington Koo, declared that his delegation had grave doubts on the wisdom of submitting the issue to the International Court of Justice.

Dr. Koo proposed that a small sub-committee including Indian and South African delegates be appointed to study the various proposals before the Joint Committee and submit a draft resolution suggesting basis for a resumption of negotiations between the two parties concerned for a satisfactory settlement of the case.

Juraj Slavik for Czechoslovakia appealed to the Indians and South Africans to try to find a solution to the problem among themselves.

The Argentine delegate, Senor Enrique Vieyra, supported the reference to the International Court, but Milan Bartos (Yugoslavia) supported the Indian case.

The Chilean delegate, Senor Felix Neito Del Rio, urged that South Africa should suspend the Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act.

For America, Charles Fahy, supporting South Africa's proposal to seek advice from the International Court, said: "It seems to me there is something unfair, under the very

trying circumstances of this case, to ask fifty-three nations to unite against one of its members and intervene for the first time in the history of the United Nations."

Sir Hartley Shawcross, urging unanimity in the request to advise the International Court, said that any decision by a narrow majority whether favouring or against India would do nothing, but create contempt in India and division in South Africa.

The Ukrainian delegate, Dmitri Manuilsky, strongly urged the Committee not to refer the matter to a sub-committee as proposed by Dr. Wellington Koo, but to deal with it "now—today".

Heaton Nicholls (South Africa) contended that it was probably the opinion of the judicial tribunal that the matter would have more influence upon the public everywhere than political opinion expressed by the Joint Committee.

Mrs. Pandit, in her speech, said that the matter was one which affected issues that should be decided by the Joint Committee and the fifty-four persons round the Committee table. "Does it not stand to reason that South Africa is able to do this (treatment of Indians) because of the support she received from two great nations," she asked.

Mrs. Pandit said she was approaching the problem "as my countrymen" were, in a spirit of extreme friendliness, without bitterness and without vindictiveness.

"When I was coming here, I saw Mahatma

Gandhi, who is very much interested in this whole case. He said to me as I was leaving : ' I do not mind whether you come back having won your case or having suffered defeat, but you must come back as a friend of General Smuts,' and that is not what any man in Mahatma Gandhi's position would have said."

Mrs. Pandit disclosed that she met General Smuts the other day at a reception. " I was glad to meet him because this issue which we have placed before this Committee is one by which we want to remove bitterness that exists in the world today—we want to remove suspicion that is playing such havoc between men and men today," she said.

Mrs. Pandit vigorously criticised Sir Hartley Shawcross for the manner in which he supported South Africa.

" As far as India is concerned," Mrs. Pandit continued, " we have brought this case here that the world may know that we at least believe in the Charter and as far as possible for its implementation. We think that only in implementation of the Charter lies the future of the human race."

A long and fiery debate started on the procedure of voting. Egypt, the United States, Britain, China, Norway, Poland, Ukraine, Panama, India, Brazil, Ethiopia, Columbia and South Africa all entered the debate again with their ideas of how the amendments should be voted.

Sir Hartley Shawcross took the floor again saying : " Mrs. Pandit made a somewhat

bitter attack on me. I do not consider it worthwhile to reply.

"Yesterday I suggested to Indians that if they wanted to avoid any long delay on a decision of this issue, it should be referred immediately to the International Court which could then send it back to the Economic and Social Council."

"This would obviate anything like year's delay. I doubt whether a delay of two or three months will be very serious, especially when one realises we are not going to get two-thirds majority on this thing one way or the other," Sir Hartley continued.

He then asked the committee to take the vote. India's delegate, Justice Chagla, intervened, however saying: "It is cruelly unfair on those who are suffering in South Africa to waste any time in reaching a decision on this issue. It is not right that matters should be referred to the International Court at a time when the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa goes on in this poisoned atmosphere. I ask that the Indian resolution be voted on first."

The Ethiopian delegate, Blatta Meden, then moved an adjournment to "avoid any precipitate action being taken tonight."

Heaton Nicholls objected, saying "The vote ought to be taken as soon as possible. If this political body after listening to a few debating speeches condemns South Africa without having any evidence except hearsay, which would not be accepted in any court of law, it would

be condemning South Africa on hearsay."

The adjournment was then agreed to by twenty-seven votes to eight with several abstentions.

VI. WE HAVE TO FIGHT HARD

Justice M. C. Chagla, temporarily taking over from Mrs. Pandit the leadership of the Indian delegation, in the discussion, vigorously opposed General Smuts' suggestion that the matter be referred to the court. "General Smuts has made no concession, whatsoever, because he does not consider the very point we are fighting for, namely that this Assembly is quite competent to decide this important matter," he added.

Justice Chagla declared that the Indian delegation would be prepared to consider the appointment of a commission by the General Assembly to go to South Africa to investigate the matter on the spot, but the Indian delegation would not agree to the suggestion made by General Smuts that the International Court of Justice could send such a commission.

Justice Chagla said : " It would be fatal for this body to allow the Court of International Justice to be dragged into politics."

Andrei Gromyko (Soviet Russia) said that he was of the view that the supplementary proposal made by General Smuts " does not modify in any way the substance of the original South African resolution."

Mrs. Pandit's statement withdrawing the Indian resolution led to one-and-half hour's

procedural discussion as to how the Committee should vote. Prominent among those who took part in the sarcastic and heated exchange as to the interpretation of rules of procedure were: Sir Hartley Shawcross, the Chairman, Manuisky and Gromyko.

Intervening for the third time, Sir Hartley told Manuisky, "If the rules of procedure are looked at, I should not have to intervene again."

At one point the Chairman, in a long explanation why the French-Mexican proposal should be voted first, said: "An international obligation has been violated." On the decision to vote on the French-Mexican proposal first, the United States (Charles Fahy) followed closely by Greece, Netherlands, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Brazil explained why they would vote against it.

One-hour-and-three-quarters after the meeting opened, the vote started. It was obviously going to be a closed decision. In fact the last four votes of all-in-all in favour—turned the decision and the French-Mexican proposal was adopted by twenty-four votes to nineteen with six abstentions.

The vote made voting on the other motion to send the matter to the International Court unnecessary and constituted a victory for the Indian delegation.

Mrs. Pandit was overwhelmed with congratulations on the announcement of the vote. The meeting immediately adjourned and delegates crowded round her. Mrs. Pandit, who

was wearing a pink carnation, edged her way through the crowd and smilingly walked up to General Smuts. The heads of the two delegations, which conducted a bitter campaign in the committee, shook hands.

"Well, are you satisfied?" General Smuts asked.

Mrs. Pandit smiled and replied: "Well, I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The point which I presented for my people has gained a hearing."

General Smuts said: "I appreciated your statement. I thought it very good."

Then in serious tones General Smuts said: "You should not have talked about South African war criminals."

Mrs. Pandit quickly denied that she made any reference to South African war criminals. "What I said was crimes in South Africa were similar to those which led to the war," she said.

General Smuts replied: "God forbid."

General Smuts appeared to have accepted her explanation and turning to leave said warmly: "My dear child, you and I have to fight hard in the world."

Chapter Six

THE TIRELESS WARRIOR

Inside and outside India Vijayalakshmi Pandit, like her illustrious brother, continued to hit hard against imperialism, colonialism and fascism. While fighting for India, she fought for the whole world.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit continued her battle relentlessly against the giant of South Africa, General Smuts, whose marriage with British imperialism was celebrated in the blood-bath of the Boer War in which Mahatma Gandhi had worked as a stretcher-bearer. The heroic scenes of the war of independence in South Africa had also inspired Jawaharlal Nehru in his lonely nook in London. Jan Smuts had forgotten the noble qualities of the Indian nation whose representatives under Mahatma Gandhi had rendered noble services to South Africa in the Boer War as well as the First World War ; and whose soldiers in Egypt had defended Africa against the hordes of Hitler under Rommel only a few months before the war in Europe was over. Jan Smuts, like a stone-boiled imperialist, had forgotten all the noble services rendered by Indians to South Africa and had picked up the threads of colour superiority complex as soon as Hitler had committed suicide and the wolf of war was staved off the doors of his country. Nay, he threw

even the Atlantic Charter into the dustbin which he had fervently advocated when British imperialism was in the oven. Against all this Mrs. Pandit had to fight.

I. INDIA VERSUS SOUTH AFRICA

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, commenting on the result of the voting on India's complaint against South Africa, said it was India's second victory—a victory not in narrow sense, but it was a victory of fundamental principles. She felt satisfied with the result.

On behalf of the Government of India she thanked all those nations which had supported India's case.

Before the voting on the French-Mexican proposal was taken, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, leader of the Indian delegation, announced that the delegation had decided to withdraw the Indian resolution in favour of the joint resolution submitted by the delegations of France and Mexico. This resolution requires the Governments of South Africa and India to report at the next session of the General Assembly what measures had been adopted to effect a settlement of the dispute.

The resolution declared that the General Assembly report, subject to confirmation, the opinion that the "treatment of Indians in the Union should be in conformity with international obligations under the agreements concluded between the two Governments and the relevant provisions of the Charter."

Mrs. Pandit, speaking in soft warm tones,

told the committee : " In view of the fact that we are not here on any vindictive spirit, that our sole object is to create conditions in the world by which not only peace might prevail and that the United Nations can function and reach their achievements, we do not wish to place in the way of this committee any difficulties in the matter of voting."

She appealed to other delegates, who have presented amendments to the Indian resolution, to withdraw them in favour of the joint proposal of France and Mexico.

General Smuts said : " My Government has consented to the matter being referred to the International Court. It will agree to that reference being enlarged so as to include facts as well as law. The court may conduct an enquiry it thinks right on the facts sent by the commission to South Africa, if it wishes so as to establish true facts to arrive at true determination of law.

" We are not able to agree in circumstances which have arisen here, and in the face of the attack which has included a suggestion that we occupy a position comparable to Nazi war criminals. I, therefore, make a suggestion that the matter be referred to the court with the enlarged power to go not only into law but facts as far as they come under the matter of law."

But General Smuts' suggestion for reference to the International Court was not accepted as the majority of the delegates were in favour of adopting the French-Mexican proposal.

II. END THE FRANCO REGIME !

Concerted action by members of the United Nations for ending the Franco regime in Spain was urged by Vijayalakshmi Pandit when the Political and Security Committee of the General Assembly resumed its discussions on the Spanish issue.

Mrs. Pandit asserted that India was glad to express her whole-hearted support and sympathy with the people of Spain. She expressed her complete condemnation and detestation of the Franco regime.

Mrs. Pandit added : " When Manchuria was attacked by Japan it was India that first raised her voice in condemnation and, by way of gesture to China, started a nation-wide boycott of Japanese goods which was most successful.

" I appeal to all States to make known to the world in no uncertain terms their attitude towards the Franco Government and to act consistently with principles of the United Nations. The matter cannot be regarded as a domestic issue since it contains the possibility of a threat to the peace of the world. It must, therefore, be treated as of international importance and immediate and unanimous action should be taken by which the Spanish people may be helped in ending the fascist Franco regime."

III. HEAR THE VOICELESS PEOPLE !

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, addressing the plenary session of the United Nations Assembly on the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, declared : " The admissions

made by the South-African Government in regard to racial discrimination and racial segregation, its repeated attempts to embody them in law and its unquestioned practices in gross violation of the Charter constitute an indictment which is proved by these admissions. Over many years my Government, irrespective of its constitution and character, has appealed, complained, protested and sought compromise and agreements and finally, has been forced into retaliation and bring the matter before the bar of world opinion. The Union Government has taken no step, and even during the proceedings of this Assembly, have not given the slightest indication that it contemplates even temporary suspension of even the latest instalment of its offending legislation.

"Both the Head of the South-African Government, the reputed author of the preamble, and his Government stand deeply committed to honour the obligations, both in spirit and letter of the Charter. Unless the fifty-four nations assembled here place on the Charter a meaning and significance far below what its words convey in other words, unless our professed allegiance to it is a mockery—then the issue no longer rests with India or South Africa, but with us, the nations of the world assembled, who have taken upon themselves the defence of law, ethics and morality of nations.

"It is too late now to argue that fundamental violations of the principles of the Charter are matters of domestic jurisdiction of member States. If this was the case, the

Charter would be a dead letter and our professions about a world free of any qualities of race, free from want and free from care are an empty mockery."

Mrs. Pandit made a special appeal to the United Kingdom and other Dominions to lend full support to the recommendations of the Joint Political and Legal Committee, which last week, by a vote of twenty-four to nineteen, endorsed the French-Mexican proposal that the treatment of Indians in the Union should be in conformity with international obligations under agreements concluded between two Governments and relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. She added: "The Government of the United Kingdom have all along through statements made by Secretaries of State and others deprecated discrimination against Indians in South Africa.

"Let us attempt to realise the tremendous responsibilities we, as members of the United Nations, have at this stage. We are trustees of the future—architects of a new world. If we continue to act in accordance with old prejudices and old conceptions, which we have so often condemned, we shall betray the trust reposed in us.

"Millions of voiceless people who, because of their creed or colour, have been relegated to positions of inferiority, are looking up to us for justice and it is only on the foundations of justice that we can enact a new world order. We must remember in the present case that the minds of millions of people in India and

other parts of Asia and Africa have been moved to intense indignation at all forms of racial discrimination, which stands focussed on the problem of South Africa.

"This is a test case. Shall we fail in this test? I say, no."

Mrs. Pandit declared that she asked for a verdict of the Assembly on a proved violation of the Charter, on an issue which has led to an acute dispute between two member States, on an issue which is not confined to India or South Africa and, finally, on an issue, a decision on which must make or mar the loyalty and confidence which the common people of the world would have placed in us.

"Mine," she declared, "is an appeal to a conscience—the conscience of the world which this Assembly is."

IV. THE OPPRESSED HAVE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

Vijayalakshmi Pandit speaking for the second time in twenty-four hours in the debate on the Indian-South African issue, said :

"When I spoke yesterday, I expressed the hope that the British Commonwealth would at least remain neutral in this controversy, which vitally concerns one of its most important members, but Sir Hartley Shawcross's speech has shattered my hopes. He has spoken in a manner which I consider to be entirely partisan, however full of dialectic skill it may be.

"I shall only deal with two points—Sir Hartley made the suggestion that any resolu-

tion passed by this Assembly by a narrow majority is not obligatory and, therefore, he suggests that we should get a decision of the International Court. What is obligatory about the decision of the International Court ?

“ If a solemn resolution of this Assembly can be flouted, what certainty is there that a decision of the International Court, if it goes against the Union, will not also be flouted ?

“ Is this all the respect that members of this great organisation are going to show to the resolutions passed by this Assembly if the decisions happen to go against them ? The second point is a reference by Sir Hartley Shawcross to the unfortunate, but I hope temporary, differences which exist in India today. I regret I must say that Sir Hartley has not shown good taste in referring to these differences which he knows have been brought about largely by the role the British Government has played between various elements in our country in the long history of Indo-British relations. I leave this Assembly to form its own view on this. India is struggling for freedom and, at the same time, grappling with her internal difficulties with every hope of overcoming them.”

Mrs. Pandit declared that whichever way the vote went, she wanted to thank the Assembly and express with all the sincerity at her command, gratitude not only of the people of India and Indians in South Africa, but of millions in every country whose hearts have been warmed and whose minds infused by this

impressive expression of world opinion in defence of justice and fundamental human rights.

Turning to the chairman, Dr. Paul Henri Spaak, she said warmly : " Let me thank you and this Assembly for what already amounts to a great act of faith. We shall remember this and know in a way that cannot be forgotten, that justice, truth and the oppressed have friends in every country and under every climate.

" This is all I want to say. I shall make no appeal. I left it with your conscience yesterday. I am content to let it rest there."

V. SMUTS OVERSHADOWED

" India's victory over South Africa in the United Nations General Assembly is linked with the personality of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit," wrote a correspondent of the *New York Post*.

The correspondent added : " The General Assembly threw away the colour line last midnight and United States and Britain, stalwart defenders of South Africa's Western civilisation, were beaten by a slender little lady with silvery hair. She is Mrs. Pandit, the first lady of India, who won the two-thirds vote of the Assembly to support her efforts to halt the oppressive treatment of her racial fellows in South Africa.

" Throughout the two days of debate, it was Mrs. Pandit who swayed the sympathies of the delegates and the public. Her eloquent words and clear, high voice dominated the

proceedings and for the time being placed in a shadow the gaunt white-bearded figure of South Africa's leader, General Smuts."

VI. OUR FAITH JUSTIFIED

Before leaving New York by air for London, Vijayalakshmi Pandit said in a statement: "Our faith in the United Nations has been justified. Not only has India's honour been vindicated, but the United Nations Organisation has shown itself a guardian of human rights. This augurs hope for the future of the organisation and for civilisation. India is happy that she was permitted to play her rightful part in the United Nations Assembly and hopes that she may be able to contribute to the United Nations."

Mrs. Pandit told newspapermen at the La Guardia airport before she left in the British airways 'plane *Balmoral*: "The United Nations Organisation is as important to India's future as it is to the future of the entire world."

VII. INDIAN UNITY MEANS WORLD SAFETY

Two Indian women, representatives of their country at international conferences, spoke to a crowded meeting of Indians. They were Vijayalakshmi Pandit, leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Organisation at New York, and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, a member of the Indian delegation to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation at Paris.

The packed audience of several hundreds of Indians accorded a warm reception to the speakers, who were garlanded on behalf of various Indian organisations in London and two women representatives of the Indian community in South Africa.

Remarking that the Indian delegation to the U.N.O. presented their case on a moral plane, Mrs. Pandit declared: "The South African-Indian case was not entirely an Indian issue. It concerned the coloured population of the world. I had no dirty linen to wash in public. Indeed, I told the South African delegates that they should wash their dirty linen now, before it stinks."

Mrs. Pandit added: "We kept our standard and our dignity. We had a moral issue. Field-Marshal Smuts tried to argue about our untouchability and communalism. He was simply avoiding the issue. We pointed out that racial discrimination in South Africa was only a symbol of what exists in the world today. As long as there is racial discrimination, then with it will remain human conflict."

Mrs. Pandit said that India had the sympathy of a vast number of delegates, especially those from the Asiatic countries. "The Russian delegates surprised us," she added. "They knew more about the question of Indians in South Africa than even some members of our own delegation."

Mrs. Pandit said: "Our voice, the voice of the Indian delegation, was the voice of India. And if we had failed, it would have meant

that the very first time the voice of India was raised, it was defeated."

Referring to the points raised by countries, which opposed India, concerning communal differences in India, Mrs. Pandit said that although these had no bearing on the South African situation, they had to be answered and to some extent weakened the Indian position. However, the Indian delegation presented their case in such a manner that it became popular.

Addressing Indian students, who formed the bulk of her audience, Mrs. Pandit said they should work for Indian unity. "Unity in India now means the safety of the world."

She asked Indians in Britain to consider themselves as ambassadors in this country. "We must fight the battle of India in Britain and in all countries of the world. Our petty troubles—for they are petty and occupy only a small position in the world picture—must be eliminated."

Mrs. Pandit concluded: "I am a little tired of the past. Let us begin a future now, of which we can be proud."

VIII. APPEAL TO CHURCHILL

Mrs. Pandit was one of the group of distinguished Indian politicians who heard the opening speeches of the India debate in the House of Commons.

She said that she considered Churchill's speech as a very mischievous one. "It was to be expected, but I thought he was a little pathetic. While enlarging on instances like the Armenian

massacres and trying to point to the parallel of India, he completely forgot that, since that instance, the humanity has been massacred in a global war," she added.

Mrs. Pandit said that she thought the lesson that war should teach those who were willing to learn was that peace and freedom were indivisible.

Mrs. Pandit continued : " When any nation is passing through a period which is an inescapable part of the transition between dependence and freedom, it is up to people to keep their hands off, and not, by their words and actions, aggravate the situation."

She said : " Every sensible person in India deplores the sad occurrences which are taking place there. We are all working incessantly to create goodwill and restore normal conditions. If Mr. Churchill is genuine in his anxiety to see the Indian people free, he should not aggravate the situation by embittered attacks, which contain a mass of half-truths.

" There is one thing we have learned—that we would no longer look for the support of any one, that our freedom must come from ourselves. We have shown our willingness to pay the price of freedom, whatever it may be, and to Mr. Churchill, and those who think with him, I would say for God's sake be silent about India and let us fulfil our own destiny."

IX. 'LAKSHMI COMES HOME

On December 13, 1946, Vijayalakshmi Pandit arrived at the Palam aerodrome.

Every time Vijayalakshmi returned from abroad, she returned a great hero and she was soon acknowledged as the First Lady of India. Sarojini Naidu, although maintaining her intellectual superiority, was quite eclipsed by her younger comrade-in-arms.

In a message to the *Associated Press of India*, she said: "It was a good fight and I feel that it was a privilege to represent India. Let us hope that the success at the United Nations is symbolic of the success to come in India."

During her stay in the United States, Mrs. Pandit said, she had informal discussions with Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister, on the question of India's diplomatic relations with Russia. She added that many countries like Egypt, Mexico, Norway and France had also expressed their desire for an exchange of representatives with India.

Speaking about the French-Mexican resolution which was accepted by the Indian delegation and passed by a two-thirds majority, Mrs. Pandit said that the resolution, though couched in mild terms, had a very deep implication if within the next year the Governments of India and South Africa were not able to solve the problem in a manner satisfactory to both, the United Nations would take such steps as they might think it necessary to deal with the matter.

The Russian delegate expressed to Mrs. Pandit his personal regret at India not being elected to the Security Council.

Mrs. Pandit said that in every committee in which India was represented, Indian representatives not only led in the discussions but also received the highest admiration for their part in the debates from other participants. She made a particular reference to the judicial sub-committee on account of the high level maintained by Justice Chagla.

Among the personalities she met in America, Mrs. Pandit made a special reference to Paul Robeson, who evinced great interest in the question of the colour bar. He had met her several times for discussion of this and allied questions.

X. THE STORY OF U.N.O.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, speaking at a meeting held at Constitution Club, said that she had drawn two lessons from her experience at the U.N.O. The first was that the position of India in the international field was fairly strong and that Indians were as well able to stand up in an international conference as anybody else. In fact, they were better than most. Secondly, "Our foreign policy, as has recently been made known to the Western world, has been very deeply appreciated and all sections of people from all countries came to me and expressed a desire to have a closer understanding and better relationship with India.

"The general impression about the freedom struggle in India is not the same as the freedom struggles in other countries. The Indian

struggle is looked upon as a sort of underground rebellion which is the result of some discontented elements fighting the benevolent British, who are trying to protect us from each other. That point of view has never been taken with regard to other nations who have fought, and that is why we have to be so very careful in cementing quickly, while goodwill lasts for us, those relationships which will, in the event of any further troubles amongst ourselves, be useful to us, not to any particular community but to the country as a whole."

The success which the Indian delegation was able to achieve at the U.N.O. was really the success of the U.N.O. itself, she said. In the success of the resolution placed before the U.N.O. by France and Mexico and accepted by India, lay the very foundations of the U.N.O. itself. If that resolution had fallen through, there would have been ample reason to suppose that the foundations of the U.N.O. had not been well and truly laid.

Not only was the Indian delegation able to contribute towards the discussions which took place but in most cases we are able to give a lead that was finally accepted, both in committees, and in the general session.

Great emphasis was laid in speeches by the Anglo-Saxon nations on the fact that a free India had joined the U.N.O. "This, I think, was quite deliberately done, with a view to minimising the part that the Anglo-Saxon nations themselves played against us. Actually the part that Britain played was sabotaging

everything that the Indian delegation brought up. It was done subtly and in a very clever fashion but it was sabotage. The constant cry about a free India diverted attention from the main issue. For instance, in committee, a speech would begin by acclaiming India as a sovereign state and then very subtly, in opposing the Indian resolution, they would go on to talk about the internal troubles in India, about Hindu-Moslem clashes which were given such prominence in the press, and inevitably before the end of the speech, the delegate had several times mentioned the question of untouchability. By the time he had finished speaking, the picture subconsciously in the minds of the delegates was one of a country torn by strife and dissension, a country which believed in suppressing the minorities and the like.

"Fortunately for us, this sort of things did not go very far. In the beginning, it did hamper us a little and prevent us, perhaps, from securing all the goodwill we might have secured, but actually we were able to defend ourselves very well. Long before the session was over, we had made it perfectly clear that in spite of the fact that we were not a free nation and in spite of the fact that the National Government in India, although it was a representative government, was not the government of a free India. Yet, we for the first time, as a delegation, represented the voice of India and that we were free to take a line of action as we thought fit and not as

dictated to us, either by the Viceroy or by anybody else. This did have a very good impression, especially when they compared it with the work done previously, which obviously in spite of the able people who represented India, was a reflection on the then government of this country."

Referring to India's failure to secure a seat on the Security Council she said: "India fulfils the conditions laid down in the Charter for membership and we felt no great pressure was required in order to line up the nations on our side. But the position was very different and partly through want of experience we failed rather badly. We might not have secured a seat in any case but I think we would have got more votes had we known how to lobby and create contacts."

Mrs. Pandit made warm references to the countries which had supported and canvassed for India. A large number of Western nations not only spoke in our favour but many of the European representatives said things which the Indian delegation had hesitated to say. Poland, for instance, was amazingly frank. In the same way we had remarkable support from other delegations, outstanding among whom was the Slav bloc. Russia supported us with great force and actually canvassed for us. We had the overwhelming support, naturally, of the Eastern peoples.

"Every other nation went out of its way to try to understand the Indian situation and tell her how anti-Indian propaganda was being

done in their respective nations. I was surprised to find that although a great deal was known about the demand of the League, the tribal incident when Pandit Nehru went to the Frontier, etc., yet nothing very much was known about other things that were being done in India or about many of the things the Congress had done in the past. Of course Mahatma Gandhi was almost a legendary figure but he was there somewhere in the background. The more exciting things like the shooting on the tribal border, the murder of innocent Moslems in Bihar and things like that were of primary importance and were not only shown on the screen but the information was conveyed through pamphlets and leaflets issued by various information agencies and in the press.

"I found without exception that not one of the Eastern nations supported Mr. Jinnah. Not only that but in many of the meetings which I addressed the Eastern delegations asked to be allowed to speak. On one occasion when Pandit Nehru's birthday was being celebrated by the national committee for India's freedom a number of Eastern delegates asked to be allowed to take part in the proceedings and speak."

She had been often asked why the U.S.A. had voted against us. She thought the reason was that, at the moment, the U.S.A. was not very clear about her foreign policy and was not in a position to break away from Britain. An overwhelming fear of communism was responsi-

ble for many of her actions in the U.N.O. America, nevertheless, was in unique position of leadership today, and Mrs. Pandit hoped that she would be able to grasp it.

Mrs. Pandit made a critical reference to the propaganda done in America by Begum Shah Nawaz and Ispahani. The "distressing part" of their propaganda was that they dissociated themselves from the existing Government in India and, in season and out of season, they said that in the very near future there was going to be grave conflict in India because the Hindu majority was going to suppress the Moslem minority. But, like the efforts of Sir Hartley Shawcross, the British delegate to the U.N.O., they "probably did us some good and not much harm."

XI. THE SISTER SUPPORTS THE BROTHER

On January 20, 1947, in the Constituent Assembly Vijayalakshmi Pandit vigorously supported the resolution of Jawaharlal Nehru, demanding that India should be declared a republic.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit said that it was her privilege in 1937 to move the first resolution after the inauguration of provincial autonomy in the United Provinces, demanding a Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution for an independent India. "Today, ten years later, that Constituent Assembly is meeting here. I consider this a historic milestone of our progress towards freedom. And yet freedom remains just a little beyond our grasp.

Imperialism dies hard. Even though it knows its days are numbered, it struggles for survival. We have before us the instance of what is happening in Burma, Indo-China and Indonesia, and we see how there, in spite of the desperate effort the peoples of those countries are putting up to free themselves, the stranglehold of imperialism is so great that they are unable to shake it off.

“We had seen the sorry spectacle of what happened in San Francisco when the U.N.O. was being founded. The Asiatic nations assembled there and were so dominated by the imperialist powers that ruled them that they could speak with no independent voice, and echoed only the voice of the respective imperialist powers. The result is already seen in the fact that, in spite of the brave words of the Charter that came into existence at that time, no implementation of that Charter was possible because there was not enough strength behind it. The peoples of Asia were silent and could not insist upon its implementation. Even now we see that Asia is very far behind the peoples of Europe in representation in the U.N.O. and it was perhaps the first time in history that at the last United Nations Assembly a country not free itself was able to raise its voice, only for the cause it was espousing but for the freedom of the oppressed and dependent peoples all over the world. The reason that the United Nations Assembly has recognised this is, I think, due to the fact that India, even today, has within herself the

great power of giving a lead to the world.

“An independent India would no doubt assume the leadership not only of Asia but of the world. So, when we meet here in this Assembly to draw up the future constitution of our country, we must not forget that it is not only ourselves and our own good that we must look to, but that we have it in our power to help the entire world towards a better way of life.”

“Our contribution to the future,” she concludes, “is one of neutralisation of political and social discontent and to that end we must work for the establishment of freedom in our own country and of freedom in the world. Unless Asia comes into her own, the world cannot function. India, to assume her leadership of Asia, and Asia of the world, must first free herself socially, economically and culturally. I appeal to the members of the House to pass the resolution in order to show that this ancient land is conscious of the challenge that has been presented to her and can live up to the ideals of the past.”

XII. INDIA'S FIRST LADY

“India's First Lady” was the designation given to Vijayalakshmi Pandit in the January-7 issue of the weekly news magazine *World Report*.

The magazine of world affairs features on its front cover a colour photograph of Mrs. Pandit dressed in a blue *sari* against a blue-green drape.

Inside, in the section devoted to “personali-

ties", an article of over one thousand words presents her as a "new champion in world forums for the millions of Asiatics and Africans who live under colonial flags. . . ."

The article states that "the chief of India's delegation to the United Nations, a forty-six-year-old widow, has left a deeper personal impression on the world's diplomats than any other delegate at the recent meeting of the General Assembly."

It says: "Mrs. Pandit is to India a combination of what Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Madame Chiang Kai-shek are to many people in their respective countries, but with some important distinctions of her own.

"Mrs. Pandit is her country's leading exponent of the emancipated modern women, brought into world politics by family ties, yet able to stay there through personal ability.

"Unlike Madame Chiang and Mrs. Roosevelt Mrs. Pandit has long been a government officer in her own right. She was the first woman member of a provincial government in India, a post she achieved nine years ago.

"Mrs. Pandit is a writer, a lecturer and a gracious hostess, but, in terms of the politics of her own country, she is far more radical than the other two eminent women. For where empires are concerned, Mrs. Pandit is frankly a revolutionary.

"She wants freedom for subject races wherever they have not yet attained political independence."

The article then reviewed the Indian dele-

gation's victories at the United Nations session in the disputes with South Africa over racial discrimination, and gave a biographical sketch of Mrs. Pandit, describing her Brahmin background of wealth, her education in England and India, her interest in politics after meeting Mahatma Gandhi and the incidents which landed her in gaol for civil disobedience.

The magazine noted that since Mrs. Pandit's return home, there had been an outcropping of criticism.

"The Indian press is not universally well impressed by her dashing elegance, her gift for moving in an aura of dramatic political sensations. It has been charged that she was unable at New York to change from emotional oratory to the cold bargaining of the last days of the Assembly meeting.

"The division at home over Mrs. Pandit's position in world politics makes her more than ever a world symbol of India. Her own problems are a mirror of India's larger troubles, because her future political effectiveness, like that of India, depends to a large extent upon the ability to achieve unity at home."

Chapter Seven

SUCCESS IS FAILURE

India's first lady is now a lady without lustre. India's achievement of independence has robbed her of her glory and greatness. Since August 15, 1947, she has become a clog in the mighty machine and has been lost to the firmament of a dream-grandeur.

There is a pleasure in achieving, not in achievement; in struggling, not in success; in effort, not in triumph; in walking, not in reaching the goal.

India having achieved her goal, all the heroes and heroines, both Lakshmis and Jawaharlals, have shed their halo of personal greatness. Their greatness henceforth is merged in the greatness of their country. Inside and outside the country they will be judged by the manner in which they play their role as helmsmen of India's destiny.

Lakshmi has played a notable part as an Ambassador to Russia and then as an Ambassador to the U.S.A. and as leader of the delegation to the U.N.O., particularly in her championship of the Indians in South Africa. But she is now no more a glamorous lady. As a top diplomat her best actions and movements are secret and guarded. Her achievements are being entombed in the archives of India for the future generations to value

and ponder over and determine her place in history. For the present she must live and die obscurely like a corpuscle in the blood of political machinery which needs must work dimly and darkly beyond the eye of the publicity camera.

I wonder if it would not have been better for her to have held fast in independent politics instead of becoming a diplomatic employee of the foreign department. India is a strange country in which a paid person soon becomes *persona non-grata* with the public. But she not worried about her prestige but about her work and the duty assigned to her. There is little doubt about her sense of duty and dependability.

At Cleveland (Ohio) Mrs. Pandit declared on December 3, 1949 :

“ Nationalisation of industry in India is at least fifteen years away, although the Congress Party is committed to the principle.”

Speaking at the opening of the “ arts of India ” exhibition, she declared that the Indian Government was too busy with more pressing problems, developing from internal strife that attended its emergence as a nation, to take more than a token interest now in nationalisation of industry.

She asserted that, in her opinion, India had denounced communism in stronger terms than any other nation—and had done more to combat communism—but feared inroads from that ideology if her country did not take measures to increase its productivity and raise

the people's standard of living.

America could best help the Indian Government by supplying technical assistance, she said.

Mrs. Pandit emphasized that the needs of India, and the needs of all Asia, were urgent. If their needs were not satisfied, she warned, "the people might turn to some other area for help."

Addressing a big gathering under the auspices of the Council of World Affairs, she said political freedom was a first step towards larger freedom. "My country, which gained its freedom a bare two years ago, is taking steps in that direction.

"The method by which we achieved our freedom in India was not a political expedient. It was the method of civil disobedience engendered by Gandhiji. Yet today, in brief two years, we have been able to take a place in the world picture."

She said India had great leaders and its people felt they were bound to succeed in their efforts to establish a nation but added it was necessary for India to move rapidly "so that China will not leave us behind."

"Our Government has been faced with most extraordinary difficulties," she declared. "We have met trouble in trying to make a social-economic-political blueprint in my country."

A strong India or a weak India could make all the difference in Asia, she said.

"We hope that we can give the world a

modern State that can avoid the pitfall of war," she concluded.

There is no doubt that Her Excellency Vijayalakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador to the U.S.A., is always busy promoting the welfare of her country within the sphere assigned to her. She works like a bee.

The Great Nehrus achieved their great purpose on August 15, 1947. They did achieve the freedom of India for which they struggled fully and faithfully under the supreme command of Mahatma Gandhi. They have the best of lieutenants of the General of Mass Disobedience in all the marches that the Army of Non-violence undertook.

The history of the Nehrus after August 15, 1947, does not affect the greatness of the Great Nehrus. It may add to their glory but it cannot take a feather away from their plumes. The Nehrus can very safely rest on their oars if they so desire ; but there is no rest for the heroes and Nehrus are indeed heroes. Perhaps they might make mistakes, commit blunders, but they should be judged not by their achievements but by their motives. If welfare of the masses is their main motive, there is no earthly reason why the masses should not fare well with them.

It was Lord Acton, I believe, who said that power always corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Let us believe that the Nehrus will not drink of this dull opiate of the soul. So long as they exercise their power judiciously the fame of the house

of the Nehrus will skyrocket still further. If not, they might end as the Chiangs of China.

A family like an individual is tested in happiness not in sorrow, in success not in failure, in comfort not in hardship, in power not in prison. It is the greatest moment of trial for the Nehru family. They have need for, what the ancient sages called, *tapasia* or austerity. Jawaharlal and Lakshmi are now treading upon the razor's edge. The slightest self-indulgence on their part might have disastrous effects on the nation. The problems that they have to tackle were never so stupendous as today. India's achievement of freedom is only end of the beginning.